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TWO PLAYS

RODERICK'S CAREER
GAME!

BY

KATHARINE SEARLE

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TO

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IN LOVING RECOGNITION

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RODERICK'S CAREER

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CAST

RODERICK SCARSDALE
CYRILLA
ANN, *their child.*
MRS. MAYS (Aunt Ann), *Roderick's aunt.*
IMOGENE, *the maid from Jamaica.*
MARIAN,
FRANCES,
GLADYS, } *Roderick's friends.*

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RODERICK'S CAREER

Scene: throughout the play, the study in Roderick's house. Roderick is a student, therefore the books. Roderick is an artist, therefore pictures finished and unfinished hang about the room, some by Roderick, some by other people. Roderick is also a man of taste, therefore the furniture is fine, not profuse, not absurdly rare and costly. The wall-papers only an artist could have chosen, the hangings likewise. It is a characteristic room. Only some one with a definite taste and a definite, or perhaps I had better say an aspiring personality, has furnished it, for Roderick is still aspiring. He is not yet definite.

There is a fireplace at right, and long windows out onto a terrace at the back. What can be seen of the garden is bright and formal. At the left is a door which leads into the stair-hall. The front door can be seen when this door is left open, also part of the flight of stairs. There is another door which leads into the dining-room at the right, above the fireplace. A flat-topped desk in mahogany with claw feet stands in the middle of the room, with its left end up toward the windows. At its right end, facing the audience, a fine antique sofa. At the upper end of the fire-place stands a large leather-upholstered arm-chair with bandy legs. There is a gate-legged tea-table up stage to the left of the French windows. There is a lyre-backed chair behind the tea-table, and several more of the same sort about the walls. To the right of the window there is a light stand, with a picture, a few books and a vase of

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flowers. Rare books under glass, and a beautiful carved chest, down left.

It is spring of any year. The house stands in one of the Hudson suburbs of New York.

When we first see the room, it appears to be full of ladies. There are only four, but in a small room, four ladies, very well and expensively dressed, are quite a crowd. The clothes are certainly expensive, but that does not necessarily mean that the ladies are affluent. For instance, Marian is quite poor, but she refuses to look poor. Is it to her credit? At least, she will capture a husband whose appearance is like hers, for only expensive-looking young men like Marian. So her dressing is for her an asset. Frances,—she is never called Fanny nowadays,—is also a garland of pretty and expensive colors. Frances can afford it. Her mother "married well." But the mother is unhappy. So is Frances. Yet there is nothing of the weeping willow in Frances's apparel. Gladys,—she is going to spell it GWLADYS *as soon as her name appears on a program,—is desperately smart. She cannot afford to be and is heavily in debt for it. But it impresses people and Gladys, though she cannot afford to be well-dressed, cannot afford to be ill-dressed. Marian, Frances and Gladys do not matter, but they feel they do and so they matter. Is it not a curious society in which we live? We are impressed from birth with the fact that self-advertising is essential and we practice it as religiously as our grandmothers practised deportment.*

Mrs. Mays is of an earlier vintage than the above ladies and her clothes are naturally good because she has a large income and can afford them. She has an expensive figure. This is where she outshines the younger women. She has been perfectly corsetted all her life. They wear no corsets at all and they slouch terribly

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younger women. And though she is at least twenty years older, she does not look more than five years older. This is because she is always alert, and alertness is the only preserver of youth. The younger women feel no need of looking young because they are young. They have no bloom. And the paint they wear only gives them a hard tired look which is very unflattering did they but know it. The young girls of today are too apt to leave the "ingenue stuff" to the chorus girl. The young girls of today, rarely sleep. They study as well as dance all night, and by day are in constant motion. Granted that they exercise and wear sensible clothes, all that they do takes the form of rivalry of some sort, and their usual ambition is to appear in the public press in one way or another. Their bodies get no rest. Perpetual motion makes women passionate, but does it make them kindly or restful?

Mrs. Mays is not passionate, but she is fashionable. She is aware of the value of position, such as it is in America, whether one cultivates a clan, plain and intermarried; or the hard-won position of new money, much advertised and jealously guarded; or whether one owns the position of inherited wealth, which is after all the only real social position we have established in America. This last is an aristocracy derived from the English, rather anaemic, but neither loud nor insecure. Mrs. Mays belongs to the lesser ranks of the latter class. Her people have always been in society both here and abroad. She has a standard of manners and customs not to be deranged by passing fads, and she can make herself agreeable on all occasions without the slightest effort. But all this has not prevented her from encountering the distresses of life. No one suspects how distressful they are to her. She is very game. But in private, Mrs. Mays is inclined to be caustic, a trifle oversuspicious, and not very optimistic.

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small, he considers himself very much of a person. He is dapper in his dress. He was originally intended to follow his aunt's style in the masculine, but he was artistic and definitely artistic. People have always said that Roderick would surely make a name for himself some day and his friends are all prepared to come and buy his pictures. No obscurity for Roderick. No struggles through the early years. Roderick is not affluent. His father failed in business,—it was an honorable failure. But when Roderick lost his parents, his aunt Mrs. Mays, herself without children, became his best friend. And Roderick is so promising! And so delightful! Roderick will surely get on. Mrs. Mays always adds, "If he doesn't make an unfortunate marriage." So she has taken pains to pick out these girls from among the daughters of her acquaintance to meet him,—daily if possible,—as sweetly unaware as the rest of the world that these girls are as much misalliances for Roderick as any he could make for himself. For the fact that they all come of stated families, or do the things all girls do, or dazzle the world with the taste of their modistes, will not make them more understanding or sympathetic, and give them humor or sense or reserve or self-command. All of which are needed in a wife for a man,—and in a husband for a woman. However, Mrs. Mays, though she affects to admire the modern girl openly, secretly criticises her, preferring her own style. She does not analyse her discontent,—perhaps thinks it rests on jealousy. For she does not dare to realize that the present is not on the whole an age of successful wives and husbands, mothers and fathers. Neither does Roderick! He does not realize matrimony at all. He does not feel it is his business. It is his business. He should be giving it careful considera-

tion. He should have been made to understand this from

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himself to art, Roderick feels there is no necessity for him to be anything but engrossed in his own work, he calls it,—self is what he really means. And of course the promiscuity of acquaintance between sexes and degrees and races, such as exists for children in our public schools, has been denied him. Roderick is a private school product. Beyond being more or less coerced into the "right" dancing-schools and going to occasional house-parties at the houses of the "right" people, having done the conventional thing in his study of art in New York and Paris and having tried one or two secret adventures on the way,—not many for Roderick is not of the robust school now called "red-blooded",—Roderick knows very little about women and cares not at all what they think. He knows he will always be kindly treated, for "people of our sort" always are. And he secretly believes he is a catch, and puts that aside for whenever the time comes to marry.

Ladies may struggle with kitchen problems, but Roderick has no need of that. Mrs. Mays has seen to it that Imogene and her husband have been persuaded, at high wages and at her expense, to take care of him. Imogene is a pretty light-colored mulatto from Jamaica, with starry eyes and pearly teeth and a high sweet voice and very little energy. She speaks the patois of Jamaica negroes, part cockney, part Old English, part the dialect of the Southern United States. Imogene possesses the pearl of refinement which her white sisters have temporarily laid aside for higher things, and she begins many of her sentences with "Peradventure."

When the curtain rises, Mrs. Mays is discovered at the tea-table. Imogene attends with a tray. Marian is flirting

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and Gladys, a smart up-to-date girl with immense self-assurance, are sitting at the right end of the sofa. There is a murmur of conversation.

MRS. M. Here's the other, Imogene. [*She hands her a cup.*] And pass the muffins again.

IM. Yes, Mis' Mays.

[IMOGENE *passes two cups to* FRANCES *and* GLADYS *and passes the curate's assistant at the same time. Then she languidly retires through the door up right.*]

MARIAN. Isn't she pretty?

ROD. Who?

MAR. Imogen, of course. [*To* RODERICK] You're in luck.

MRS. M. She pronounces it "Armogene." And don't go telling Roderick she is pretty. He hadn't noticed it.

MAR. Trust him! Roderick knows a good thing when he sees it.

ROD. [*Going to* MRS. MAYS] I know a good *aunt* when I see one. Believe me, I do. She supplied me with Charles and Imogene his wife.

[*He pats* MRS. MAYS'S *shoulder. She looks up gratified.*]

MAR. Men can always get servants.

GLAD. Naturally. No one to nag them.

FRAN. Some one for them to fuss over.

MAR. Women do like to be bossed!

ROD. Do they? You surprise me!

GLAD. You'd hardly guess it from this bunch, would you?

MAR. [*Putting down her cup and turning to the portfolios*] Fascinating! I do so love your pictures!

[RODERICK *takes a portfolio from the chest and begins to turn over the sketches for* MARIAN. MRS. MAYS *rises and goes out on the terrace.*]

MAR. [*Artfully artless*] O I'm crazy about this one!

ROD. That? No. I don't care about it myself.

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MAR. [*Persistently*] I dare say I don't know! But I like it.

ROD. [*Pleasantly flattered*] Very kind. I did that at Mentone.

[GLADYS *and* FRANCES *exchange glances.*]

GLAD. [*Pretending to examine a book on the desk*] She never was so interested before!

FRAN. They're just a fad of hers.

GLAD. Pictures?

FRAN. *Men.*

GLAD. Cut her out. Now you've seen the house. It certainly is a peach. And Roderick certainly is a peach. He'll make a good husband.

FRAN. Rubbish! Why don't *you*—?

GLAD. Not money enough.

FRAN. But Roderick's aunt has. She's practically adopted him.

GLAD. She'll support *him*. But she'll be hanged if she supports his wife. I know these aunts! I have my way to make. Roderick would only be an ornament as far as I am concerned.

FRAN. Why I should think he could help you! He's studied all about these new Theatre Arts.

GLAD. [*Laughing*] I couldn't *face* a manager with that High Brow Stuff. Besides, I know better than to tie up to anyone just now. A woman who wants a career is a fool to marry while she's still at the foot of the ladder. [*She regards* FRANCES *a moment.*] What's the matter? I always thought you and he might hit it off.

FRAN. [*Bitterly*] O we've bravely gotten over that.

GLAD. [*Looking at her quickly*] Didn't come to anything.

FRAN. No.—I still think *you* might have—he admires you.

GLAD. Yes, I dare say. But I wouldn't let Marian get him, Frances. She wouldn't know what to do with him. You would. You and he were brought up in the same way.

FRAN. [*With a sour laugh*] You're most kind.

GLAD. I mean it. It's a shame that you should have to

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live at home. Just hanging around. Not appreciated. You must get married and get away.

FRAN. You mean well, Gladys.

[*She rises and walks disdainfully out onto the terrace and joins* MRS. MAYS. GLADYS *shrugs and turns to the pictures. Imogene comes in at the door up right.*]

IM. Yo' car, Mis' Mays.

[*There is a general movement.* MRS. MAYS *and* FRANCES *come in.* RODERICK *and* MARIAN *break up their flirtation.* GLADYS *moves toward* MRS. MAYS.]

GLAD. We must be going now, Mrs. Mays. It's been perfectly lovely.

MRS. M. Thank you, dear. I think I'll send you girls along in the car without me.

[IMOGENE *crosses the stage and goes out into the hall, leaving the door open. The girls exclaim and talk together.*]

GLAD. Can't you go with us?

MAR. How too bad!

FRAN. Don't mind. We can walk.

MRS. M. O no, no, no, don't mention it. Ruggles will put you down anywhere you want to go and come back for me. I still have things to arrange here in the house. And I want to talk to Imogene.

[IMOGENE *appears at the door left with wraps. She and* RODERICK *assist the girls into their wraps. They all talk at once. After various polite expostulations and exclamations, they make their adieux and are finally bundled off at the outer door.* RODERICK *goes off with them.* MRS. MAYS *and* IMOGENE *are left in the room.* MRS. MAYS *turns from the door and sits at the desk.*]

MRS. M. [*Taking out some memoranda*] Are the right number of pieces coming back from the laundry every week, Imogene?

IM. No, Mis' Mays. Dey take tings sometin' awful.

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MRS. M. Hm. Well, the other laundries are just as bad. None of them can resist real linen nowadays. I'll send the car for the things and have my laundress do them. — I looked for the finger bowls everywhere at home. I can't find them.

IM. Peradventure dey in yo storeroom, Mrs. Mays. Dey uster be lotter tings dere yo didn' know about when I live wit yo.

MRS. M. I'll look there. I had forgotten. — I want to account for the telephone calls. They sent me the bill on Wednesday and it seems rather large,—so many Long Distance calls.

IM. Charles and I don' use it none, Mis' Mays.

MRS. M. I know you don't. But you may. You are at liberty to use it from time to time.

IM. Tanks, Mis' Mays.

MRS. M. I'll speak to Mr. Scarsdale myself about the bill.

IM. Tanks, Mis' Mays. [*She starts toward the door, then comes back.*] Mr. Roderick don' call so very much. Some folks call im alla time. But dat wouldn' make no bill, would it?

MRS. M. [*Smiling*] No, Imogene. It wouldn't. And Imogene, don't let Mr. Roderick leave the door unlatched. He's very careless about it and with all that silver here, it makes me nervous.

IM. I know, Mis' Mays. But he don' like ter ave me tell im tings.

MRS. M. Just watch and do it yourself, then. Thanks, Imogene.

[IMOGENE *goes off at right.* RODERICK *comes in at left.*]

MRS. M. Got them safely off?

ROD. O yes. You'll stay and test Charles's cooking, won't you?

MRS. M. Not tonight. I'm dining out. We'll have a dinner here sometime, shall we? And ask the girls.

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ROD. And please some boys, Aunt Ann. It's very hard to spread oneself out so thin.

MRS. M. Of course! But the girls had been begging to see your house so long that I had to bring them down. How do you like them?

ROD. Who? The girls? O. All very nice girls.

[*He wanders about the room.*]

MRS. M. Roderick, you must settle down.

ROD. [*Collapsing on the sofa*] O don't say it like that!

MRS. M. I mean it. You must settle down. You have this house now. You must settle down.

ROD. Is that why you helped me with the house? That I should settle down?

MRS. M. Partly. That is, of course, I thought you meant to settle down when you wanted a house out here.

ROD. I didn't say I was going to, did I?

MRS. M. No. But I assumed it. And of course everyone else assumed it.

ROD. O. How very like Everyone. Very kind of them I'm sure.

MRS. M. Well, of course it's only natural.

ROD. To think I'm going to settle down to please them? It may be natural to others. Not to me.

MRS. M. [*Looking at her memoranda*] Roderick, the telephone bill is rather large. Toll calls.

ROD. Is it? So sorry.

MRS. M. No matter at all. I'll simply change the service. Telephone all you like. I had the small service put in because you said you didn't like modern inventions,—much as I knew you'd need them. But—

[*She looks down at the bill.*]

ROD. What's the matter?

MRS. M. [*Looking up*] That is what I long to ask you.

ROD. You mean?—what do you mean?

MRS. M. Haven't these telephone calls got something to do with—settling down?

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ROD. Bless my soul, Aunt Ann. Are you a Pinkerton in disguise?

MRS. M. All aunts are. And Imogene rather let the cat out of the bag—

ROD. [*With heat*] I'll thank her! If she's going to spy on me, I don't want her round.

MRS. M. She simply reported in all innocence that she didn't know you called as much as you were called.

[*She laughs.*]

ROD. [*Walking away disgusted*] Servants! She's always looking after me. I think it was a mistake to have a servant who has been so long in the family.

MRS. M. You're fortunate to have anyone at all in these times. Don't be annoyed, Roderick. I only hoped the telephone calls meant this settling down.

ROD. When a man settles down, must it always mean he marries?

MRS. M. Certainly.

ROD. Aunt Ann, I don't want to marry. Don't make me.

MRS. M. Very well. As you like. I'm not trying to make you.

ROD. Yes you are. You dragged all those girls over—

MRS. M. [*Laughing*] Dragged! They were wild to come. I was afraid they'd come without me. Tell me, Roderick. I thought there was something between you and Frances.

ROD. [*Shortly*] O dear no.

MRS. M. You used to go there a great deal.

ROD. I did. Can't a man go to a girl's house a lot and like to dance or like to flirt, or the devil knows what?

MRS. M. Well, you grew up with her. I rather expected.

ROD. You needn't. Frances doesn't know a thing about what I'm interested in. She knows she doesn't. Besides, I can't bear her family. And a man's a great fool that marries a girl with a family he can't bear.

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MRS. M. Excellent. Continue in the same strain. Marian is dreadful. I hope you'll never take her.

ROD. Marian? She's very good-looking. A man might certainly do worse.

MRS. M. O Lord. It's Marian then.

ROD. It is *not* Marian. Marian may propose. But I shall dispose.

MRS. M. [*Laughing*] Gladys, I suppose isn't to be thought of? A girl of her family go on the stage! It's preposterous. Besides she can't act.

ROD. My dear aunt, you don't suppose being able to act has anything to do with going on the stage!

MRS. M. Why not?

ROD. It hasn't. Gladys's talent is *business*. She's going to be a great success. And she would never waste her time on me.

MRS. M. O. That's it. Well, she doesn't sound like a good wife. That's certain.

ROD. It certainly is!

MRS. M. Unless she tried her hand at managing *you*?

ROD. I wouldn't have it!

MRS. M. You can't help yourself, you know. When I was young, women were expected to conceal their efforts. The murder's out in these days. Men are chosen Roderick. Very few are strong enough to choose. And you might as well put up with it!

ROD. [*Angrily*] I want you to understand *I choose my wife*. I will not be chosen. A great many things go into the making of my wife.

MRS. M. Well?

ROD. Family. Taste. Fondness for home life. Also travel. A knowledge of how to meet people. And she must have a little money in her stocking. You know how

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more I don't have to be. I am a very happy artist. Then why marry?

MRS. M. O, if it comes to that, the right woman will be a help, not a hindrance. But the thing is to find the help and not the hindrance.

ROD. Better do without. I am comfortable single. Double I'd be devilish uncomfortable on my income. Why should I marry then? Aunt Ann, I've a perfect horror of a baby.

MRS. M. [*Leniently*] I know you have.

ROD. You know, they're *awful!* And never to have any place to one's self. Some one always interrupting. No. I have all the benefits, none of the disadvantages of married life. A perfectly good cook, for one thing, and a perfectly good waitress for another. How many married people can say that? A perfectly futile useless aunt who never does what I like and dresses badly—

MRS. M. [*As* RODERICK *stands behind her and puts his hands over her shoulders*] Wha-at!

[*She takes his hands in hers.*]

ROD. To preside when I have dinner parties. Why do I need a wife, when I've got you, Aunt Ann?

MRS. M. [*Distinctly pleased*] Well Roderick dear, I do the best I can.

[*Her very smiling face denies the indifference of her words.*]

MRS. M. [*After a pause*] Roderick, if you marry an unsuitable girl, we'll lose each other.

[*She bites her lips.*]

ROD. Will you kindly tell me what makes you *harp* on that?

MRS. M. Because I feel so uncertain. A man never knows himself on the subject of women. Only women know the subject of women.

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MRS. M. [*Slowly*] Entangling alliances.

ROD. What about them?

MRS. M. Have you never made any, Roderick?

ROD. [*After considering*] On what evidence do you base that question?

MRS. M. On Imogene's remarks, a photograph you have had for some time, and my own intuitions.

ROD. [*After another pause*] Whose photograph?

MRS. M. I don't know. That's it. You left it about while you were staying with us. You left it about, Roderick. That encouraged me. I felt you were not serious. But—

ROD. But?

MRS. M. She was a very handsome girl. And she'll make you very unhappy if you marry her.

ROD. [*Puzzled*] How *do* you—do you know who she is?

MRS. M. I never saw her.

ROD. [*After another pause*] Aunt Ann, you know we men have a devil of a time.

MRS. M. I know you do. That's why I'm interfering in this tasteless and unwarranted way.

ROD. I never call this interfering, Aunt Ann. I call it interest. And I like to have interest shown in my little doings.

MRS. M. Are you engaged to her Roderick? O dear, I suppose you won't want to answer a plain question.

ROD. I am not engaged to her, Aunt Ann. I am very plain about that.

MRS. M. I know. But living, as you have, with artists, it's quite possible to form an alliance of a special kind.

ROD. It is not possible. For *me*. For to tell the truth I'm not fearfully interested in women. It seems to me, my work is the chief business of my life. I exclude everything else. Particularly women.

MRS. M. Ah, that's it. Your [illegible] up so easily.

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You're my boy you know. And, well,—that girl is dangerous if you want to know it.

ROD. [*Astounded*] But I've done sketches of her that really look like her. [MRS. M.'s *eyes widen.*] How did you get all that from a bad photograph?

MRS. M. I've got rather keen sight, and a great deal of experience, not all of it pleasant. Where did you meet her?

ROD. In New York.

MRS. M. I take it she is some sort of a public character.

ROD. Not yet. She has a big voice. She's a bully good singer. And she's having a very uphill pull. Singers do, you know. Nobody is ever decent to them.

MRS. M. O. She's made you think that, has she?

ROD. See here, Aunt Ann, that's all wrong. You know it's true. Women in the opera world are never expected to be respectable.

[MRS. MAYS *looks at him sharply.*]

ROD. And she's respectable. Absolutely. That's why she's having such a hard time. The only way out is for her to marry a man with a fortune.

MRS. M. O. Yes. I've heard that.

ROD. And—it doesn't look as if *I* could be that man, does it?

MRS. M. [*Partially appeased*] No. It doesn't.

ROD. You are fearfully prejudiced against her. Otherwise I should so like to have you meet her. And hear her sing.

MRS. M. Is she going to stay long in this country?

ROD. She thinks she has just struck oil. A rich woman down in Hackensack wants to educate a singer. She thinks she can work Hackensack.

MRS. M. It's disgusting how they work people—

ROD. Indeed it's not. That's the way everybody gets on.

MRS. M. Do you work people, Roderick?

ROD. Of course.

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enemies. That is certainly legitimate. If they like you, they buy your pictures. If they don't like you, you can whistle,—even though you're a Rembrandt.

MRS. M. After all, you don't have to toady. Your position is as good as can be had in *this* country. You have the entrée anywhere you go, Roderick. You have breeding. And education. And the best friends. And I'm pleased with you. That is why I like to worry you with these things. Forgive me. And kiss me goodbye. I have to go now. Look and see if Ruggles is there.

[RODERICK *runs out on the terrace.*]

ROD. He is there. Patience on a mantlepiece. The picture of misery. Fighting it out on this line if it takes all summer and all that kind of thing.

[*He goes out into the hall and gets her wraps, then sees her out at the front door.* IMOGENE *comes in at the door right with two cock-tails on a tray. She places the tray on the desk, lights the fire and the lamp, and begins to clear up in a ladylike way. She hesitates as if waiting to speak to* RODERICK.]

ROD. [*Coming in*] O Imogene! Yes. That's right. You lighted the fire. This room is no end cosy. N'est-ce pas, Imogene?

IM. Hit a aansome room, Mr. Roderick. Is yo haunt goin ter stay for dinner?

ROD. [*Sipping his cock-tail*] She couldn't. — No, leave the other one. I can manage two.

[IMOGENE *is about to depart when* RODERICK *calls her back.*]

ROD. Imogene! I think I'll have dinner in here!

IM. Li-ike to ave dinner in ere, Mr. Roderick?

ROD. I surely would.

IM. Very good, Mr. Roderick. Peradventure you li-ike dis table?

ROD. Yes! Just the thing.

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etc., and sets RODERICK*'s place while he looks on with undisguised satisfaction.*]

ROD. [*Grandly*] I shall have that chair.

IM. [*Obediently placing the large arm-chair*] Yes, Mr. Roderick. Shall I draw to de curtains?

ROD. You may draw the curtains, Imogene.

[*She does so and starts again for the door at right.*]

ROD. Imogene, what's Charles got for dinner?

IM. Oysters, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. Very good. And then?

IM. Yo soup, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. What is it?

IM. Charles, e call it *pottage allareen.*

ROD. [*Puzzling*] O. Yes. And I hope Vienna rolls. I'll never forgive him if he hasn't given me Vienna rolls.

IM. E ave, Mr. Roderick. An e say yo might ave ad dem ere dis.

ROD. Ere what?

IM. Ere dis.

ROD. Imogene, you are delicious. Go on.

IM. An dere's breast a duck, Mr. Roderick. Wine sauce. An macaroni gratt'n. An Charles e wanter know if yo like red peppers on yo salad.

ROD. What's the salad?

IM. Hit one Charles ave invented. E call it *Ungareen.*

[*She smiles shyly.*]

ROD. That's very nice, Imogene. I haven't the least idea what it is. All the better! And I like red peppers. I hope I know as little about the dessert.

IM. Muss-an-bananas.

ROD. What?

IM. Yo know bananas, Mr. Roderick?

ROD. I don't like bananas. Charles knows it.

IM. Hit hain't bananas, Mr. Roderick. Hit pine-apple.

ROD. [*Slowly smiling*] O. Thanks. It's all very nice and surprising. And I like to have it in a language I can't understand.

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IM. [*Smiling*] O dat French, Mr. Roderick. *Charles* says.

ROD. Why—why! So it is, to be sure.

IM. Charles, e put a dinner on a tray.

[*She goes out right and returns with the oysters which she sets before* RODERICK. *He sits to eat with the greatest satisfaction.*]

IM. Mr. Roderick?

ROD. Yes, Imogene.

IM. [*Swinging from side to side*] Charles an I would like ter go ter my huncle's ternight.

ROD. [*His joy somewhat dashed*] O that's begun, has it?

IM. My huncle, e ave a baby, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. A new one or an old one?

IM. A new one, Mr. Roderick. He go'n be christened ternight.

ROD. Well. Who's to answer the door? And the telephone?

IM. I stay, Mr.Roderick, if yo don' want me ter go.

ROD. O no. Go. But does your uncle have—*christenings* every week?

IM. O no, Mr. Roderick. On'y once a year.

ROD. Very moderate I'm sure. Well. I shall be going out later on, probably. So we'll let all the bells ring. When are you going?

IM. When you can leave us go, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. Go ahead. Bring in all the French dishes and let me wait on myself.

IM. [*Showing all her pearly teeth*] Tanks, Mr. Roderick. Charles, e tank yo too.

ROD. Very welcome. When may I expect you back?

IM. O we be ere to yo breakfas', Mr. Roderick.

[RODERICK *holds up his hands.*]

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IM. Yo want anyting, Mr. Roderick?

ROD. Ah. The evening paper, Imogene.

[IMOGENE *goes into the hall, opens the front door, picks up the paper, deliberately puts the door on the latch and starts to shut it.*]

ROD. [*Calling*] Here. Don't do that? [IMOGENE *waits.*] Leave the latch! [IMOGENE *obeys.*] I shall be going in and out mailing letters. I do like to feel for once I can get on without a latch-key.

[IMOGENE *comes in with the paper which she lays beside the tray.*]

IM. Yo lock de door befo yo leave de ouse, Mr. Roderick?

ROD. [*Impatiently*] O yes, yes. I'll attend to it.

IM. Yo want anyting, Mr. Roderick?

ROD. Nothing but company, Imogene. Next time tell me before the baby's born, so I can arrange to dine at the Club.

IM. Yes, Mr. Roderick. Goodnight, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. [*Shortly*] Goodnight.

[IMOGENE *goes out at right.*]

[RODERICK *becomes absorbed in the breast of duck and the evening paper. He has a good deal of trouble in eating and reading at the same time. He cannot arrange the light or the paper satisfactorily. When he has made an elaborate arrangement, the paper slides down. And when he has made a simple arrangement, he cannot see. He persists nevertheless, and finally when he begins to read, he forgets to eat. When he eats, he forgets to read. By and by he begins to realize his own solid comfort. He eats his salad, I am sorry to say, at one mouthful, tastes the dessert, begins to laugh at* IMOGENE, *finds the "mousse" too sweet and pushes it roundly away and blesses the coffee*

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arette and continues the paper. He presents a front of solid comfort.

Night has fallen outside. The firelight glows warm and RODERICK, *deep in books and newspapers, certainly looks the ideal of evening tranquillity, when the door into the hall is slowly pushed open and a tall young woman in travelling clothes stands on the threshhold. Roderick, suddenly aware of the draught, raises his head and looks across. What he sees is* CYRILLA.

CYRILLA *is a finely built woman of middle height and with a mass of blonde hair. She suggests a very high vitality, rather under eclipse just now. She looks defeated. Her clothes are plain but well made and in the height of the prevailing style. Though it is certainly astonishing to see her there, she does not look like a siren, only a very vigorous healthy up-to-date American girl.*]

ROD. [*Jumping to his feet*] Cyrilla!

[CYRILLA *stands smiling at him.*]

ROD. How on earth did you get in?

CYR. Nobody answered the bell. The door was unlatched. Aren't you glad to see me?

ROD. Of course. But—speechless with surprise. I thought you were in New York.

CYR. I'm not, am I? [*She looks about the room.*] So this is the little house. It's a dream, Roderick. And so like you.

[*She wanders about a little.*]

ROD. But Cyrilla,—why did you come?—Anything wrong?—Why didn't you telephone?

[CYRILLA *sits on the sofa.*]

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[*She looks down a moment, then begins suddenly to wipe away tears.*]

ROD. Cyrilla,—you don't mean to say after all she said—

CYR. After all the beast said, she thought she'd have to think it over. And she heard other girls. And finally settled on a girl who *looks* like Lillian Russell.

ROD. Can she sing?

CYR. No. Of course she can't sing.

ROD. O it's beastly.

CYR. Now it's all got to be done over again.

ROD. Better luck next time!

CYR. No. I don't look like Lillian Russell. That's all they care about. That's *all!* I shall never get anywhere now.

ROD. Cyrilla! Nonsense! With a voice like yours—

CYR. O you don't know what it is. *Voices* have nothing to do with it.

ROD. I thought Manstrom considered you had the biggest future of any girl he has taught in the past ten years.

CYR. So he said.—Do you know what he meant?

[RODERICK *does not answer, but walks about.*]

CYR. Since *I* wouldn't, *he* wouldn't. That's all. I've gambled on this chance. It's slipped up. Now I haven't got a cent.

[*She rises restlessly.*]

ROD. But Cyrilla. You're not going to give up the fight.

CYR. I'll have to borrow money to go home. That's what I've come for.

ROD. Of course. How much do you want?

[*He opens the desk drawer.*]

CYR. O no hurry, Roderick. Let's talk a little first. Or haven't you time? I've no one but you to advise me.

ROD. At your service.

CYR. Awfully sweet of you. [*She sits again.*] By the way, is there anyone in the house to be shocked at my calling on you?

ROD. No. The servants are out.

CYR. I forget these little things. I expect I put Hack-

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ensack out with my ways. But Lord! You can't be thinking every single minute!

ROD. You have to, Cyrilla, to get on.

CYR. I know your line. But that's not me.

ROD. Cyrilla, answer me one question.

CYR. [*Turning with a winning smile*] Shoot, boss.

ROD. What did you do to Hackensack to make her turn against you?

CYR. It was nothing! Nothing at all! A member of the Dawn Club told on the bunch and it got to her. We never did any harm. Just had fun. We've *got* to have fun sometimes.

ROD. Hm.

CYR. O now don't be a stiff.

ROD. Cyrilla, it's these things that do for you.

CYR. Rubbish. Look at the people on top. How did they get to the top? Because they *looked* like Lillian Russell, and *acted* like Old Scratch. It isn't morality, its want of it, that succeeds.

ROD. I know but—tact, Cyrilla. Some of the girls in New York get on with that.

CYR. O rubbish. Tact be blowed. Give me a cigarette. All the big people tell me the same thing. Either pull with a big man, and we know what that means. Or marry well. That's the whole story.

ROD. [*Desperately*] Marry well, Cyrilla. Do marry well.

[CYRILLA *pauses lost in thought.*]

CYR. I can't marry well. It bores me to the point of screaming even to think of it! Down home I could have married well as you say! God! God! [*She beats her forehead with her fist.*] No. I'd rather do the other thing.

ROD. [*Disgusted*] Don't!

CYR. Why the high moral tone? You know what I'm up against.

ROD. I know but—

[*He walks about nervously.* CYRILLA *watches him rather closely.*]

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CYR. [*After a long pause*] Roderick, do you know what has kept me from throwing my cap over the mill long ago?

ROD. [*Wheeling*] No.

CYR. You!

ROD. O come, Cyrilla, I'm not that sort of a pious example.

CYR. You have to be whether you like it or not. You are a gentleman. I mean really a gentleman. You're fastidious. That bunch I go with aren't like that. Greenwich Village maggots. I'm so sick of them.

ROD. Drop the whole push. You can't do better.

CYR. I mean to. Especially now. [*She sighs, and pauses.*] But I wish I hadn't met you.

ROD. Why?

CYR. You have made me unsteady. You've made me doubt. You've made me want things I can't have and which would stand in my light if I did them.

ROD. I'm sorry, Cyrilla. Very sorry.

CYR. So I thought I had better come and see you before—

ROD. What?

CYR. Well,—I go back to New York and call up Manstrom.

ROD. No!!

CYR. Why not?

ROD. Cyrilla, the thing for you to do, obviously, is to go home and rest awhile. It'll do your voice good, it'll do your nerves good, you can get over that New York racket—

CYR. [*Crying out*] No!!

[*She bursts into tears.* RODERICK *regards her uncertainly. Then in his nervous march through the room he goes to her and pats her shoulder.*]

ROD. There, there, Cyrilla. There, there, my dear girl.

CYR. [*Through her sobs, rather grotesque*] O Roderick, don't tell me to go home! You don't know what you're saying! It's hideous. The very thought—after believing I should see Paris.

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[CYRILLA *leans back, red-eyed, blowing her nose, the picture of despair.*]

ROD. Cyrilla dear, you know I only meant for the best.

CYR. [*Limply*] I know you did, Roderick. But what *is* best? I don't know. — Going to Manstrom is only what they all do. What I'll have to get on with later. There's no such thing as being nice and decent in the profession of opera. Now don't go telling me about the singers that made good in New York during the war. All-America Brand. And perfectly fine. I'm not their kind. I can't *manage*. And I *can* sing. [*With sudden violence.*] *I will not* give up my voice! I will not! It's my gift! It's what I've got. I think about it night and day. It's all I want to make me happy. It's my gift! It's my gift!

ROD. [*Sitting down beside her, patting her hand*] It is. It is.

CYR. Thank you, Roderick. I feel somehow you understand. You're very sweet with me coming in this way. But I'm up against it. I suppose I ought to think about suicide. I don't want to. But I suppose I ought.

[*She has risen during the last. He jumps up, seizing her hands.*]

ROD. [*Shocked*] Cyrilla, don't talk that way!

CYR. [*Smiling*] Don't worry, Roddy. I've too much fight in me to give up yet. But what else is there for me to do?

ROD. You can't earn money,—can you?—teaching?

CYR. You can't make a living that way, Roddy, unless you want to be a slave to it. You know I've tried to teach along with my other work. It's killing and it hurts my voice. But I have tried, now haven't I?

ROD. You have. I give you credit for everything! I admire your sand immensely. Always have. Sit down, Cyrilla, and don't talk about dying for goodness sake.

[*They sit again, she a little more tranquil and he a little less so.*]

CYR. [*Finally, squeezing his hand a little*] You're awfully *cunning* to take it this way, Roddy. I couldn't go to

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a single other friend with my troubles. That's why I came to you.

ROD. Of course you can come to me. Of course you can. You did exactly the right thing.

CYR. I wish we could go out and take a Fifth Avenue bus. It was always after these times, we used to take a bus.

ROD. There are no buses here. Only beautifully laid out roads with stupid people living in large houses.

CYR. Why on earth did you settle out here, Roddy?

ROD. To be near Aunt Ann of course.

CYR. But why didn't you live with Aunt Ann?

ROD. Her husband you know. He kills everything.

CYR. I know it. They do.

ROD. And out here there's a beautiful light and I can get a lot of orders for my portraits.

CYR. [*Dreamily*] Lucky Roddy. Lucky Roddy. Independent Roddy.

ROD. I'm not a rich man, Cyrilla.

CYR. Not rich, but independent.

[*She sighs deeply.*]

ROD. We ought to think up some plan by which *you* could be independent.

CYR. Dear Roddy!

ROD. But I mean it.

CYR. [*Dropping his hand, very sane and motherly*] No. There's only one thing to do. And that is to go back to—

ROD. Don't! I can't bear it! It makes me sick!

CYR. I suppose it does.

ROD. If you do that, say goodbye to me.

CYR. [*Tremulously; rising*] Then I must say goodbye—[*He stops her with his arms.*] O Roddy, *can't* you see why I came?

ROD. For my advice, of course.

CYR. And your advice is for me to go home. Shame on you! Shame on you!

ROD. No. No. You are too big. You musn't throw yourself away.

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CYR. It won't be throwing myself away. It may be finding myself. The others do. The others do.

ROD. I don't care what the others do. You are bigger than they.

CYR. I'm a singer. First of all! I'm a singer. Do you hear me?

ROD. You are a woman too! A fine straight honest sincere woman! That's what makes you so much greater than those others. Animals! I won't have it! I won't have you like them!

CYR. [*Surprised at his vehemence*] Why Roddy!

ROD. I've decided. I won't have you destroyed. Marry me.

CYR. Marry you, Roddy?

ROD. Yes.

CYR. But Roderick—

ROD. It's the only way out.

CYR. And spoil your career?

ROD. Yes. Anything. But why should it? We can live here. You and I can get on with my income. Perfectly. Why didn't I think of this before? We both have careers. Love art. We've always been the best of friends. And out here you can work quietly. I can get people interested in you. Through Aunt Ann. You shall go to Paris. I will go with you. We'll find the means.

CYR. [*Incredulously*] You mean it? You mean it, Roddy?

ROD. Of course I mean it. You and I are made for each other. We always were. I see it now. Daylight.

CYR. [*After a minute*] I've always loved *you,* Roddy. Ever since I knew you. But I never thought you cared—

[*She leans against him. His arm goes about her.*]

ROD. Cared! It's always been here inside me. I know now!

[*He holds her close and kisses her deeply.*]

CYR. [*Raising herself*] Roddy, I can't stand it. I can't. What *shall* we do?

ROD. Get married.

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CYR. Yes. But when, you foolish boy?

ROD. Tomorrow!

CYR. Darling, if I dared—

ROD. You do dare. You do! Say you do!

CYR. [*Slowly smiling; with passion*] I—*dare*, Roddy.

[*She laughs, kisses him and turns away. She picks up her gloves, puts her hat to rights.*]

ROD. [*Taking her gloves and throwing them down*] Don't go yet! Don't go yet! You splendid thing! Kiss me!

CYR. [*Laughing*] Why Roddy!

[*She kisses him.*]

CYR. [*Not drawing away but suddenly very maternal*] Roddy, I've never loved anyone but you. And before this, our careers always seemed in our way. Not now. It seems right now that we should come together. But I've always kept myself for you, dear, always.

ROD. I—I'm not such a very bad man, Cyrilla—

CYR. [*Playfully*] Goosie! Of course you're not. Compared to me—

ROD. [*Shocked*] Cyrilla!

CYR. Don't be angry. I told you I'd kept myself for you. But— [*She stands away from him.*] Roddy, I'm a terribly passionate woman. And I've been tempted. O I've been tempted!! If it hadn't been for you. And now this. You came in time! I'm so happy.

[*She goes to him again. They embrace.*]

CYR. [*Tearing herself away again*] I must go now, dear. I must go—

ROD. Where?

CYR. I don't know. But I must go. Back to New York. Tomorrow—

ROD. [*With a kind of fear*] *Not* back to New York! Go to Aunt Ann!

CYR. Nonsense Roderick. I will not go to Aunt Ann. What business have I with Aunt Ann?

ROD. I can't have you wandering about the streets.

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CYR. Dear Roddy, I've been out at night alone before. *Had* to be—

ROD. Let me keep you here, Cyrilla.

CYR. [*Suddenly pulling him close; whispering*] O Roddy,—servants.

ROD. They won't be in all night—

CYR. [*Trying now to push him away*] They might come back—

ROD. Good Lord! They might!

[*He suddenly drops her and wanders wildly about the room.*]

CYR. I'll go back to New York.

ROD. [*Peremptory*] I *wish* you'd go to Aunt Ann.

CYR. Tell me,—is Aunt Ann prepared?

ROD. [*Stopping short*] No. [CYRILLA *watches him.*] *You* stay here. Let *me* go to Aunt Ann.

CYR. [*Suddenly suspicious*] No. [*She goes up to him deliberately and puts her arm about him.*] I love you and I'm not going to leave you.

ROD. [*Putting his arms about her slowly; looking into her face*] You will stay here? In my little house? With me?

CYR. [*Sinking into his arms*] I can't help it. You came just in time, Roddy. I was giving out. Yes. I'll stay with you.

ROD. And tomorrow,—early,—we'll be married. And live in the little house. You'll stay here! Tonight! And let me take care of you! My darling!

CURTAIN

ACT II.

Scene: the same. Eighteen months later. The pretty room is terribly untidy. Baby clothes are hanging before the fireplace. Most of Roderick's personal belongings are

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and is evidently placed solely for the convenience of the person using it. The personality of the room has vanished. It is distinctly shabby,—the furniture coverings and the curtains look dingy, even torn here and there. Autumn. The garden is bare, the trees russet. A baby's crying is heard off stage at left when the curtain rises. It is loud and lusty, and Roderick, who is discovered, rises and closes the hall-door in an irritable manner. Imogene is also on the stage. She looks as sullen and defiant as a perfect lady can. Roderick is in the act of paying her wages.

IM. [*After waiting till the baby's howl is excluded*] I don' wish ter stay, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. Well. I suppose you must go. I'm glad you stuck it out as long as this. Have you told Mrs. Scarsdale?

IM. Ah hain't tell er anyting, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. Why not? After all, she's the person to tell.

IM. Ah know, Mr. Roderick. But—

ROD. Well?

IM. Mrs. Scarsdale hain't what Ah calls a lady, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. [*Severely*] Imogene. That will do.

IM. Ah hain't go'n ter talk ter Mis' Scarsdale. Not de way she talk ter me last night, Mr. Roderick. No lady talk dat way.

ROD. [*After a minute*] Does Charles want you to leave?

IM. When Charles lef' ere, e make so much money in de chef business, e don want me ter work out no longer.

ROD. Ah. That's it. Well. That's reasonable. Why should you? All right, Imogene. I'm sorry on account of the baby. I don't know whom we can get now. When are you leaving?

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most immediately at left, CYRILLA. *She tears the door open and rushes in.* CYRILLA *is slightly, but not much, altered by the experience of motherhood. She is one of those who changes for the worse.*

CYR. [*Sweeping across the room toward the opposite door*] Where's that beast of an Imogene.

ROD. I wouldn't call her that.

CYR. [*Angrily*] And why not?

ROD. She's leaving!

CYR. Leaving! [*She comes back.*] What on earth shall we do? [RODERICK *shrugs but does not answer.*] Don't shrug like that! You make me so mad. What on earth are we to do?

ROD. [*After a pause*] I should suggest going without for a time altogether.

CYR. Going without! Going without! *What do you mean?* [*Her voice is hard and unlovely.*]

ROD. I mean we can't afford it.

CYR. But your aunt is paying for Imogene.

ROD. You mean, Aunt Ann was kind enough to bribe Imogene to come here by the day after Charles left. Otherwise we would have been in this fix long ago.

CYR. Why *isn't* there enough money,—that's what I want to know?

ROD. Because I'm not earning enough.

CYR. You surely are sitting at the feet of those rich women all day—

ROD. Your lessons, my dear. That was the thing we forgot to figure on when we started in. And the lessons, I take it, are most important.

CYR. O if your aunt would only come forward. We ought to be in Paris! With all her money, it's outrageous for us to be hanging around here.

ROD. If you please, don't say anything about Aunt Ann.

CYR. I will too.

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ROD. [*Very quietly*] You will not.

[CYRILLA *is surprised into silence a moment.*]

CYR. [*With intense sarcasm*] Well. What do you expect of me now Imogene is going and there's no money for my lessons?

ROD. I only thought you might try your hand at taking care of the baby. She's older now—

CYR. I take care of that baby! What I do now is nearly killing me. You know it is!

ROD. It won't be for long, Cyrilla—

CYR. Not for long! I guess it won't!

ROD. I mean the baby will grow up. In five years she'll be quite a little girl. Going to school.

CYR. FIVE YEARS! I won't take care of her at all.

[RODERICK *is silent for a while.*]

ROD. Blake tells me they are looking for more assistants in Fine Arts at the University. He asked me if I wouldn't go in.

CYR. How much will it pay?

ROD. I don't know. Chances of a rise, of course.

CYR. [*Her eyes brightening*] Well, do it!

ROD. I'll go down and see Blake this afternoon.

CYR. That will be steady money at any rate. And then you can keep on with the portraits beside.

ROD. That's the difficulty. There may not be time.

CYR. You've got to *make* time, Roderick. We've got to have the money. [RODERICK *is silent.*] I always thought you were the vogue out here and could have anything you liked for the asking.

ROD. No. Not exactly that.

CYR. O. I suppose as long as a man is unmarried, he's the vogue. That's it. Women don't want a married man about.

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ROD. [*Covering the receiver*] Aunt Ann wants to see me.

CYR. What about?

ROD. I don't know. I'll go up and find out.

CYR. You can't go. If Imogene's leaving, you've got to stay and mind the baby. I'm due at Manstrom's at eleven.

ROD. O. Well. I'll see if she can come down here.

CYR. Of course she can come down here. It's time she did come down here.

ROD. [*Speaking into the telephone*] Aunt Ann. Cyrilla has to go to town. Imogene's leaving and I'll have to stay and mind the baby,—What?—Imogene?—I don't know. But they all *go*, you know. In that respect they are perfectly dependable.—All right. I'll expect you.

[*He hangs up.*]

CYR. She hasn't been into this house but once since we were married.

ROD. You quarrelled with her.

CYR. Why doesn't your aunt like me?

ROD. [*A little bored*] You say that quite often, Cyrilla. I'm sure I don't know.

CYR. Jealous. She's jealous.

ROD. Don't keep saying that.

CYR. Anyhow, she's no need to be. You're a great deal fonder of her than you are of me.

ROD. Cyrilla—

CYR. O no, no, no! Don't lecture. You are. It's Aunt Ann this and Aunt Ann that. Always was. I might have known. What fools women are to love men.

[RODERICK *is silent.*]

CYR. And you won't talk. And you won't answer back. I could stand anything if you'd only come out into the open.

[RODERICK *is silent.*]

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ROD. Cyrilla!

CYR. Say it! Say it! I'm unwomanly. All right. Then I *am* unwomanly. But artists ought not to have children.

ROD. Cyrilla. You weren't always so set against the baby.

CYR. Well, if there's anything to live on, there's no harm in a singer having a baby. It generally helps her voice. But if she's worried every minute, and can't afford the baby, she's no business with it. I know better now.

ROD. We go over this once a week, Cyrilla. There's no need of going into it again. The only thing for me to do is to try to earn steady money and with my income, we may make out. The truth is what with the taxes out here, we ought to sell the house.

CYR. And live where?

ROD. In a flat! [CYRILLA *gives vent to a dramatic exclamation.*] There it is. You see you can't stand it. And there's nothing more to be said about it.

CYR. There is too! Why didn't you tell me all this when you married me?

ROD. You know as well as I do how we got married.

CYR. That's right. Blame me for it. It was you who proposed the thing anyhow.

ROD. Sh, sh. Here's Aunt Ann now.

[*He opens the door at left as the door-bell rings. He goes into the hall and admits* MRS. MAYS. CYRILLA *makes a dive for the baby-things before the fireplace, but she is too late to escape up the stairs. She confronts* AUNT ANN *in her most unbecoming guise, hair untidy, negligée mussed, with her hands full of useful though compromising articles.* AUNT ANN, *on the other hand, was never in better form herself. A difficult husband is not too much for a woman like* ANN MAYS *to manage. Greetings are exchanged with the usual lack of cordiality that exists between* AUNT ANN *and* RODERICK'S *wife.*]

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CYR. I beg your pardon. I was just taking the baby's things upstairs.

MRS. M. Certainly. How is the baby?

CYR. I don't know.

MRS. M. Well, who does? Roderick, do you? [*She says this brusquely but with humor.*]

ROD. Baby's very well, Aunt Ann. We'll go and see her.

CYR. Not now. If you please.

ROD. Very well. She's not dressed up.

MRS. M. O. Is she ever dressed up?

[CYRILLA *is much offended.*]

CYR. I have to go to her now.

MRS. M. It seems fitting that somebody should be with her.

CYR. She's never alone. I always leave Imogene with her, when I have to go out.

MRS. M. I hear Imogene is leaving. What are you going to do now? Stay in? Many mothers do.

CYR. I don't know what other mothers do. But I am a singer by profession. Not a mother.

ROD. Don't. Don't.

[MRS. MAYS *knows exactly how to irritate* CYRILLA *without getting ruffled herself. She has succeeded perfectly*]

CYR. I will, too! But of course you side with Mrs. Mays. Woman's place is the home. Well, it isn't.

MRS. M. So we perceive. However, I suppose the baby will grow up in spite of it.

CYR. Thank you. Roderick and I can manage very well —if we are not interfered with.

[*She goes off left and upstairs.* RODERICK *closes the door.*]

MRS. M [*Observing*

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ROD. [*After a slight pause*] Aunt Ann, we'll waive all that.

MRS. M. I doubt if we can. Your wife makes explanations necessary. [*In a rather hard voice*] I've come to say I cannot possibly continue to pay for your servant. I've got to have decent treatment in return.

ROD. There is no need to pay for our servant. I have been doing it all along. Here is the money. [*He opens the drawer and hands it to her.*]

MRS. M. You never used it?

ROD. No.

MRS. M. But you always cashed the checks.

ROD. Yes.

MRS. M. Why was that?

ROD. To avoid explanations.

MRS. M. I told you when I was last here that you and I would always be on the same footing. That I would pay for the maid anyway.

ROD. Excuse me, Aunt Ann, we are not on the same footing.

MRS. M. Why not?

ROD. Because you won't accept my wife.

MRS. M. I know it. And I think now I was a fool. For I have lost you. I don't want this money, Roderick. It burns my fingers. And by the look of things, you need it.

ROD. Whether I need it or not is not the question.

MRS. M. It certainly is. I am not going to have my nephew living like a scarecrow.

ROD. Sorry Aunt Ann, but you'll have to put up with it.

MRS. M. Roderick, I will not put up with it.

[RODERICK *is silent.* MRS. MAYS *watches him for a long time. Then she rises.*]

MRS. M. [*Laying the money on the desk*] Put this in the bank for little Ann.

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[*She goes to* RODERICK *and turns him toward her.*]

MRS. M. Roderick, I've done wrong.

ROD. [*Struck with her tone, looks up quickly*] No you haven't, Aunt Ann.

MRS. M. Yes. I've done very wrong. I ought to have done better by your—by Cyrilla.

ROD. I don't ask it. If you couldn't, you couldn't.

MRS. M. I ought to have put up with any wife you brought to me.

ROD. Never mind, Aunt Ann. I expect all this will work out eventually.

MRS. M. Wait. I'm going to confess. I have been jealous of Cyrilla. I don't suppose we were ever made to like each other. But I ought to have been woman enough to have borne with her. And I called up this morning because I haven't been able to sleep for a month, thinking about it.

ROD. Aunt Ann! Don't. Not so long.

MRS. M. Yes. It was a month, because it has taken that time for me to conquer my obstinacy. Now, as for you, whether you married well or ill ought not to have mattered to me. All the more if you married ill. Because I did the same.

[RODERICK *pats her hand and is silent a moment.*]

ROD. Now, Aunt Ann, you needn't think I've done badly. You see, Cyrilla is an artist. A kind of genius. That isn't understood out here. But I understand her. The truth is, I'm the one that's at fault. I'm not up to this kind of thing. I'm not a bread-winner. I—I've had no training for it.

MRS. M. Well, why should you?

ROD. Because I wasn't born a rich man.

MRS. M. But, my dear child, you know very well every cent I have is yours when I go. And while I live it's the same—

ROD. No. It's not the same. Not at all.—But that's where I've failed. It's easy enough to see. I'm going to settle down to hard pan now. I'm going to the University to teach.

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MRS. M. Since when? You're not! No. I can't hear of it. With all your talent.

ROD. Blake has recommended me. Never mind my talent, Aunt Ann. I don't know whether I have any. I used to think I had. But—I don't know.

MRS. M. Roderick! You had a career. Everybody said so. It's worry that is spoiling your work.

ROD. [*Rising and walking about*] I know what people said. And I know the kind of work I've begun to do. The truth is, a career isn't made for one by one's friends. A real career is entirely distinct from pull. And I don't believe I'm equal to it.

MRS. M. Cyrilla,—Roderick, I've got to be frank, now don't stop me,—Cyrilla is living for *her* career. She is living on pull. She is living off of you,—on anything that comes along.

ROD. Cyrilla lives for her voice. Which is remarkable. That is a fact.

MRS. M. But—her utter neglect of everything else! Surely a remarkable voice doesn't presuppose that!

ROD. Sorry, Aunt Ann, but it does. I'm not a great artist myself. But I've lived with them. They can't do anything but what they're made for. That's the whole story.

MRS. M. But, Roderick. The baby. She doesn't care for it at all.

ROD. She doesn't seem to, perhaps. She does. She's very warm-hearted. And whatever else Cyrilla is, she's honest. She's the most honest woman I know.

MRS. M. But, Roderick, how well did you know women before you married?

ROD. I thought I knew them!

MRS. M. Aha. That's it. A man never really does know women until he lives with one. Simply sampling them from time to time won't do it.

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MRS. M. Don't you see it, Roderick? You were caught by her.

ROD. [*Stung*] Nonsense! I'll tell you—I always wanted Cyrilla. But I thought marrying her was impossible. She thought the same until—

MRS. M. You found it was possible. She told you it was possible, Roderick. In other words, she needed you in her business. Don't you see?

ROD. I'm glad she did. I'm only sorry I don't measure up. That's where the trouble lies.

MRS. M. You've knuckled under. I never thought you would.

ROD. Aunt Ann, it's too late for this sort of autopsy. I've got to use what brains I have to give Cyrilla what she needs.

MRS. M. O Cyrilla! You say you're not measuring up. But is she? Come now. She has chances enough to make friends with people who will help her. Me for one. And she's thrown them all away.

ROD. [*Biting his lips*] You just accused her of living on pull.

MRS. M. Living off of you. But she isn't clever enough to use a little tact!

ROD. You call it cleverness. Perhaps it is. But I call it dishonesty.

MRS. M. Since when?

ROD. It's disgusting to go about licking people's boots. The boots of stupid people particularly.

MRS. M. Thank you. You never called me stupid before.

ROD. How on earth can you make that inference?

MRS. M. I mean—if Cyrilla had treated me decently, I would have done the right thing by you both.

ROD. Where you are concerned, Cyrilla has been stupid. Very. But I'd rather face my own responsibilities, Aunt Ann, though you are very kind to have wanted to help.

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MRS. M. When you first brought her to me, she used to sit like a bump on a log, saying nothing. And when she opened her mouth at last, it was to abuse me.

ROD. Maybe. But the point now is, how can I get along best. Do most for her.

MRS. M. Think of yourself!

ROD. O no. Her career is the important one. If mine were, I would have done exactly as she has done!

MRS. M. O I've no patience with you!

ROD. Yes, you have. You have the patience to come here. That is having patience. Great patience. And I'm very grateful.

MRS. M. But you refuse my money.

ROD. I do.

MRS. M. O this honesty as you call it! It's such nonsense.

[RODERICK *is silent.*]

MRS. M. Roderick, don't be silent. Answer back.

ROD. No. I'm not going to.

MRS. M. You are very much changed. You have changed immensely in a year.

ROD. Never mind that. All I've got to do now is work in at the University and work up.

MRS. M. O but those pitiful salaries!

ROD. Then endow a chair of Fine Arts, Aunt Ann.

MRS. M. See here, Roderick. You may try as hard as you like at the University. Cyrilla will spoil it all. They care a deal for social standing there and Cyrilla won't help that. University wives have social duties all their own. And their husband's places depend on them.

ROD. [*Suddenly*] Hang it all! Hang it!

MRS. M. Hang what?

ROD. All this. I don't care if the social standing is so fine at the University. If I teach well and the students like me—

MRS. M. But you have never taught!

ROD. O yes. I have from time to time. And—I've been preparing myself for this.

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MRS. M. You will never get anywhere. Why are you so fearfully set? Why will you go into this thing? Why must you earn a living which that stupid lazy wife of yours will tear down? People like you, Roderick. They liked your portraits. You can be a success without your wife if you want to.

ROD. [*Loudly*] I don't want to.

MRS. M. Why not?

ROD. I want to be a success on my own serious merits. What you are offering me is only another kind of graft. I'm sick of that. I want honest work. You needn't think I wouldn't have come to this anyway, Aunt Ann. Married or single.

MRS. M. You are very much changed.

ROD. Thank you. I always liked honest work. And now I've no choice, I'm going to do honest work.

MRS. M. For this thankless woman?

ROD. That's not all.

MRS. M. What then?

ROD. The baby.

[MRS. MAYS *looks up at him, suddenly shaken. There is a long pause.*]

MRS. M. Roderick, my dear, you are very brave. I'm going to leave you to do as you think best.

[*She is very gentle and womanly. She goes to him and puts her arms about his neck.*]

MRS. M. I regret this year of separation more than I can say.

ROD. Don't regret—

[*She holds up her hand.*]

MRS. M. Yes. Because it will keep me watchful. I won't make the same mistake. I'm going to live up to your standard. My dear boy, whatever happens, I'm back of you, and you shall never want a friend.

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travelling bag. She pauses at the sight of RODERICK *and* MRS. MAYS *and her face hardens. They turn.*]

CYR. I'm going now, Roderick. I shall leave this door open in case the baby cries.

MRS. M. [*Not quite at her ease in her new rôle of friend.*] Can't I stay with the baby?

ROD. O no, Aunt Ann, dear—

CYR. [*Haughtily*] It will not be necessary.

MRS. M. Can't I take you to the station in my motor?

CYR. Thank you, no. It's such a little way. I always walk. In all weathers.

ROD. It's only a block after all, Aunt Ann. Cyrilla won't mind.

CYR. [*Abruptly*] Goodbye. [*She goes out at the front door banging it behind her.*]

MRS. M. [*Sighing, turning to* RODERICK] Never mind, dear. It's my own fault. I'll make her like me yet. And I promise, for your sake, to try and like her. Goodbye.

[*He sees her out of the door. While he is gone, in comes* IMOGENE *at the door right. She has on her coat and hat. She waits, looking sulky.* RODERICK *comes back.*]

ROD. Going, Imogene?

IM. Yes, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. [*Shaking hands with her*] Well. I hope you'll get on.

IM. [*Hesitating*] Tanks, Mr. Roderick. Mr. Roderick, did anyone give de baby her ten o'clock bottle?

ROD. I'm sure I don't know, Imogene.

IM. Ah know, Mr. Roderick. Nobody did give her de bottle.

ROD. Well, I'll see to it at once.

IM. Ah did, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. O. Thank you, Imogene. When does she get the next? [*He looks nervously at his watch.*]

IM. At one, Mr. Roderick. I changed er jest now.

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ROD. [*With a sinking heart*] Thank you. At what hour does that process take place again?

IM. Yo ave ter watch, Mr. Roderick.

ROD. All right. Is all the—er—apparatus up there?

IM. Yes, Mr. Roderick. [*Her voice suddenly runs up higher than usual. She begins to cry.*]

ROD. What is the matter, Imogene?

IM. Ah cry ter leave de baby, Mr. Roderick. Ah cry ter leave de baby. She—won't ave—nobody—ter take care —of er—when I do be gone.

ROD. Well. You're determined to go in spite of it, Imogene.

IM. If it wasn't fer Mis' Scarsdale, Ah could do all right, Mr. Roderick. She spoil eveyting.

ROD. Sorry. But she's the baby's mother.

IM. [*Shrilly*] Mr. Roderick, she spoil eveyting. When I get de baby go'n right, she come an break hit all up. Baby never ave colic when I takes all de care. Baby always fresh an sweet when I got er. An' ah train er so she don' ave ter be changed alf so many times—

ROD. I dare say.

IM. An ah saves de washin'.

[*Suddenly the front door at left is torn open and Cyrilla appears again.*]

CYR. [*Furiously to* IMOGENE] You can go! I never want you in the house again!

[IMOGENE, *bridling, goes off as violently as her languid nature permits.* CYRILLA *drops her bag in the hall, comes in and flings herself on the sofa.*]

ROD. Why, Cyrilla. You've missed the train.

CYR. [*Shortly*] I'm not going.

ROD. But—

CYR. Now see here. We've got to settle this thing.

ROD. [*Tremulously*] Yes?

CYR. Now.

[RODERICK *waits.*]

CYR. I heard you talking to your aunt.

ROD. Well.

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CYR. I heard every word.

[RODERICK *takes a short turn.*]

ROD. Then I overestimated your honesty.

CYR. What for? [ROD. *is silent.*] Why? What's dishonest in listening to what people say?

ROD. It's generally considered so.

CYR. Well, I don't consider it so,—especially when it concerns me. I didn't stop to listen. I was coming in when I heard what you were saying. And I thought it was a very good chance to find out exactly where I stood.

ROD. Well.

CYR. And I know now. Your aunt thinks I'm a swine and doesn't mind saying so and you stand by and let her say so.

ROD. I never let her talk on. And she didn't call you a swine. What's more, I defended you when she said things I did not consider true. And you know that.

CYR. Between you, you made me out a very nice character. I'm an idiot and a selfish egotist and I live on pull, that's what I married you for, and all artists live on pull, and pull isn't decent. And yet I'm too much of an idiot to get the pull I should. Ah faugh! And I'm a rotten mother. And now I'm an eavesdropper. And with all this I've had about enough. I'm going where I'm appreciated.

ROD. [*After a moment's bitter silence*] I know I've failed to do the right thing by you, Cyrilla. I know I've failed.

CYR. [*A little softened*] We were fools to get married, Roddy. Fools!

ROD. Not altogether.

CYR. Altogether.

ROD. No.

CYR. Why not?

ROD. The baby.

CYR. The baby! The poor baby'd much better not have been born. The baby was the biggest mistake of all.

ROD. No, no.

CYR. They don't want to be born. We're awfully mean to bring them into the world. Rotten world!

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ROD. Well. We disagree on that point.

CYR. Naturally. Men usually do. It costs them no trouble to bring the babies into the world. And they aren't asked to look after them. *"It's not a man's place."*

ROD. Well. I *have* taken care of little Ann sometimes. You'll have to admit that.

CYR. [*Starting at the name*] That's it. Little *Ann*. You named her after the woman who's treated me worse than anyone ever treated me.

ROD. We agreed about the name when we named her.

CYR. I did it to humor you. Never again. The stupid selfish woman isn't altogether stupid. Selfish, yes. I hope I am. I ought never to have been anything else. I ought to have pulled and pushed for myself from the first minute.

ROD. We would have missed something, Cyrilla. You know we would.

CYR. I don't care. I wish it all undone. I shall undo it. I've got just the bracer I want out of this. Now I'll do everything—*everything* for myself and my career. And I'll never stop till I get to the top.

ROD. Good enough for you, Cyrilla. You ought to.

CYR. But you can't do anything for me. You can't. You've admitted it. I'll have to go to *the people who can!*

ROD. What do you mean by the people who can? Don't! Don't! Don't threaten me with that! I can't stand it!

CYR. You'll have to hear it now. Never again. If I go to town today, I don't come back.

ROD. Cyrilla!

CYR. I mean it. I've had enough. How can a woman like me stand a life like this? Drudging in a little house, day to day and day to day, and never any light, never any life. I shall die of it! I shall die of it! I've got to have what I need! [*She sobs.*]

ROD. I don't wonder. I've expected this.

CYR. I can't stand it any longer. Dragging myself about

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ROD. [*Desperately*] Cyrilla, I'll go anywhere with you, you want me to go!

CYR. No, no! I've got to be alone. I can't drag you around with me. You and your everlasting principles! I've got to *live!*

ROD. [*A little stunned*] Then—you want to leave me?

CYR. Yes. I've got to go and live my life and be myself! You are right to call me stupid! I have been! It's all been a wretched mistake. Artists can't love. They can't settle down. And I'm an artist. You know it.

ROD. I do. I have all along. I've expected this.

CYR. You did it all in the first place. It's the least you can do to let me go. You made me love you and admire your principles. You insisted we should be married. I love you still only I—don't. I mustn't! I must not let this interfere with my life any longer.

ROD. Didn't you come to me that first night because you were up against it? I saved you then anyway.

CYR. I came because I cared for you! I could have gone to Manstrom. You know it.

ROD. [*Almost shrieking*] Cyrilla! Don't! Don't! I can't stand it!

CYR. [*Suddenly hushed*] All right. I won't.

ROD. Promise me. Not to him.

CYR. [*Considering*] Well.—No! I can't promise.

[RODERICK *looks at her appalled.*]

CYR. You're awfully decent, Roddy. And I would promise if I could, but I can't. And I won't lie to you.

ROD. [*Slowly*] I give you your freedom absolutely, if you wish it. But—you are always free to come back.

CYR. Then you wouldn't get a divorce?

ROD. Certainly. If that's what you want.

CYR. I do. I've got to be perfectly unhampered.

ROD. Very well. At once. But what I say is the same. You are always free to come back.

CYR. Not a bit of hard feeling? You know you're quite wonderful.

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ROD. Well. I've cared for you, Cyrilla, tremendously. Not that it matters now, or ever did to you.

CYR. I see it, Roddy. I've been awfully grateful. And it has kept me down to you. And it mustn't keep me down any more.

ROD. You're right. But—

CYR. What?

ROD. You are always perfectly free to come to this house.

CYR. But why?

ROD. There's the baby.

CYR. No. I can't help it. I can't be tied.

ROD. You might want to be sometime.

CYR. Never now!

ROD. You don't know. It might come to you.

CYR. [*Softly*] Roddy, I'll never know a man as good as you.

ROD. [*A little bitter*] I'm nothing out of the ordinary. Besides, there are decent men in the world. I hope you'll find that out.

CYR. No. Not in the life that's before me. Well, I must go now. I can catch the next. [*She looks at her watch.*]

ROD. Have you got your things?

CYR. Yes. My bag's out there.

[RODERICK *goes out into the hall and picks up her bag.*]

ROD. Won't you need more than this?

CYR. Can you send—no, I shan't ask it! I shan't ask it!

ROD. Give me an address.

CYR. No. Let me send for the things when I'm ready. I'll send some one for them. You needn't trouble. [*Suddenly*] I'll come down for them, maybe.

[*She takes a look about the room as if loath to say goodbye to it.*]

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ROD. [*Looking at his watch*] You haven't a great deal of time. [*He gets his hat.*]

CYR. [*Suspicious*] You're going with me?

ROD. Only to the train. I'll carry the bag—

[*They go out. The door closes behind them.*]

[CURTAIN]

ACT III.

SCENE—*The same. Six years later. The room has changed again. It is now excessively bare of ornament. The pictures that appeared in Act I on the walls are still there, but all unframed pictures and sketches have disappeared. There are no curtains at all at the windows. The piano vanished with* CYRILLA. *The wall space is now entirely filled with cheap bookcases filled with useful books. The rare editions still linger in their glass cases. If one could look in on them, one would see that they have been used and are not treated with the respect which first editions generally exact. The fireplace mantle has no ornaments. It has a number of photographs of little Ann at various stages, also smokers' materials. The room is distinctly a man's workroom. The desk is littered. The various tables piled high. Portfolios of prints and drawings stand about. They do not contain* RODERICK'S *work. A dictionary-stand is in evidence. A rack with reference books stands near the desk, where the sofa used to be. The gate-legged tea-table has been denuded of tea-things. It is at present covered with a child's new toys, among which a very new doll is conspicuous. Before the fire, the leather-upholstered arm-chair still stands. The leather is torn here and there and the lining is sagging underneath. Beside it stands a child's chair.*

It is spring again. The garden is green. The budding vines are hanging unpruned about the windows.

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But all the flowers, except a small patch of crocuses in a sunny corner of the garden, have vanished.

At the rise of the curtain, MRS. MAYS *is discovered out on the terrace, looking intently off at left. She holds her hands tightly pressed together as if she were anxiously expecting something.* IMOGENE *suddenly joins her from the left side of the terrace and they both come into the room.* MRS. MAYS *wears her hat and an afternoon dress. She presents a much less striking appearance than in Acts I and II. In fact, her costume is noticeably plain. She looks distinctly older.* IMOGENE *is the same Imogene. At the present moment she is in tears.*

IM. Hain't e found er yet?

MRS. M. No, Imogene.

IM. Ah look eveywhere. All tru de garden. Ah call eveywhere. De gard'ner next door hain't seed er. Ah went down ter de store. Nobody ad seed er.

MRS. M. Don't cry, Imogene. It isn't too late to find her yet. Why, she's hardly been gone an hour.

IM. [*Through her tears*] Why, Ah see er on'y jest before. She say, "Armogene, see my little suit-case Haunt Ann gimme fer my birfday." I say, "Yes, Ann. Now put hit away and put away all yo presents. I'm go'n get yo supper." I went inter de kitchen like Ah always does. Mr. Roderick was in ere wit yo—

MRS. M. No. We were out in the garden just then.

IM. Leastways, Ah didn't think nothin' could appen ter er.

MRS. M. Ann is very quick. Children are all like that. [*She walks about nervously.*]

IM. She say, "See my little suit-case." She was awful

IM. She play go'n ter see er motter. It was one a er plays.

MRS. M. [*Thoughtfully*] I wonder if—

IM. An' Ah say ter er, "Go an put hit away, Ann. Armogene go'n ter get yo supper." An Ah adn't scarcely gone inter de kitchen when Mr. Roderick e come callin' fer er. "Hain't she in de study?" Ah say, "No." E say, "Where is she?" "Upstairs," Ah say. No, she hain't upstairs. O, Mis' Mays, where can she ave got ter?"

MRS. M. Her father will find her. You'd better get her supper ready. They may be here any minute.

IM. Yes, Mis' Mays. [*At the door*] She say ter me, "See my little suit-case."

MRS. M. Yes, Imogene.

[IMOGENE *closes the door up right reluctantly. Her sobs recede. Enter at the front door almost immediately,* RODERICK, *holding Ann by the hand.*

RODERICK, *already a little grey about the temples, still preserves the artist in his appearance. This is accentuated by the well-worn suit he wears. His face has the set look of a man whose life has been thwarted.*

ANN *is now a little girl of six. She is fair and has her father's cast of features and her mother's large eyes. She is a comely child, but there is something unmistakably odd about her. She wears a white smock and white shoes and stockings. The latter are at present much soiled, and the large bow of blue ribbon, with which her curls are garnished, is half untied and hanging down. She is whimpering. With one hand she clings to a tiny suit-case, such as is made for children. Her father holds her by the other hand with a strong grip, and they have all the appearance of having come along at a rapid rate,* ANN *running beside her father.*]

MRS. M. [*Involuntarily*] O, Roderick! Thank goodness!

ROD. [*In a low tone to* MRS. M.] Just a prank. We won't discuss it before her.

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MRS. M. Where did you find her?

ROD. Down at the station.

MRS. M. Good gracious!

[IMOGENE *bursts in at the door up right.*]

IM. Why, Ann Scarsdale! Yo run away. Yo bad girl! Armogene scold yer! Yo adn't orter ave no supper! On yo birfday too! Yo bad girl! [*All this is spoken very fast as* IMOGENE *goes up to* ANN, *kneels down before her and twitches her with every exclamation.* RODERICK *interposes as* ANN *begins to cry and runs to him.*]

ROD. I wouldn't, Imogene. She's been scared. She won't do it again. Will you, Ann?

[ANN, *without replying, embraces her father's leg, buries her face on his knee and bursts into howls.*]

ROD. There. You see she's all upset. We'll give her supper and put her to bed.

ANN [*Without raising her face, convulsively clutching her father's leg*] No, no.

MRS. M. [*Bending over her*] Ann, look up, dear. Aunt Ann wants to speak to you.

[ANN *refuses her Aunt.*]

ROD. Too much birthday. That's what's the matter.

MRS. M. I suppose so. With all those children and all the excitement. Tired out.

IM. Ah tell yer, wit all dat candy an cake an ice-cream—

ROD. Well, it's over for the year..

[*These last remarks are made in an undertone above* ANN'S *head.* RODERICK *seats himself in the big chair, and with that wonderful air of experience which fathers possess who are obliged to be mothers, draws* ANN *up on his knee and settles her. She buries her face in his shoulder.*]

IM. Where ad she got to, de naughty girl?

ROD. We'll talk about that later. Better get her supper ready, Imogene.

ANN. Don' want any!

ROD. Wouldn't you like to have it in here [illegible]?

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ANN. [*More faintly*] No, no.

ROD. Bring it in here, Imogene.

IM. She a naughty girl, jes' de same. She orter be put in de cupboard.

ANN. No, no.

IM. I tell yo, Mr. Roderick, Ann orter ave no supper at all.

ROD. Bring it in here.

IM. Well—

[*She goes out very much on her dignity.*]

ROD. Now Ann, we'll get the little table, shall we?

[*He sets* ANN *on her feet.*]

ANN. No.

ROD. Yes.

[*He goes to the table and begins to remove the toys.*]

ANN. No, no.

ROD. We'll put them on the shelves.

ANN. No.

[*But she helps a very little. Between them they bring the table to the little chair.* ANN *begins to show more interest in life.* RODERICK *has taken a little book from among the presents. He sits and* ANN *slowly climbs to his knee.* RODERICK *reads a passage from Peter Rabbit with the air of having done so several hundreds of times.* MRS. MAYS *sits in a chair on the other side of the fireplace and begins to work on a little dress of* ANN'S *which she has taken from a large flowered work-bag.*]

ANN. Let me read, fadie.

[*She pretends to read. Her finger mechanically follows the lines, but her eyes run about the room. She even twists the book to look at the pictures, Her voice keeping on with the text.*]

ROD. Very nice. Don't you sometimes turn the pages when you read? I do.

ANN. [*Hastily*] O yes.

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ANN. I don't know what comes next.

[IMOGENE *comes in with the child's supper on a tray.*]

ROD. Well, we'll stop there for here comes Imogene with your supper.

ANN. [*Beginning to whimper again*] Can't I have supper with you, fadie? I'm growed up now. I'm six.

ROD. No. Fadie and Aunt Ann have theirs later. No crying. From a grown-up girl.

ANN. [*Reflectively while* IMOGENE *places the tray*] Why does being six years old make me growed up, fadie?

ROD. When we're six, we stop being babies,—strictly speaking. [*He kisses her.*]

[*The door-bell rings.*]

ROD. That's the postman.

ANN. O, fadie, let me get the letters.

IM. No, no, Ann. Yo lose de letters. Yo a bad girl.

ANN. [*Indignant, appealing*] Fadie!

ROD. Ann is sorry, Imogene. She won't run away again. Will you, Ann?

ANN. [*In a small voice*] No, fadie.

ROD. All right now. Run and get the letters.

[ANN *runs out.*]

MRS. M. Haven't you heard yet from those people?

ROD. The University Board? I ought to hear from them now. I'm looking for a letter tonight.

[ANN *comes in with the letters, examining them, and consequently dropping them.*]

MRS. M. O pick them up, darling. Don't lose the letters. They're very precious.

[ANN *laboriously picks them up one by one.* RODERICK *puts out his hand for them, but* ANN *refuses. She enjoys looking them over.*]

ANN. No, no. Let me see if there is one for you.

IM. Yo spoil er, Mr. Roderick. Yo let er do jest what she likes. She [illegible] punished for bein' so naughty.

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IM. [*Not in the least understanding and pretending that she does*] Peradventure.

[*She goes out haughtily at right.*]

ROD. Does there appear to be one for me, Ann?

ANN. [*Still puzzling*] Peradventure.

[RODERICK *and* MRS. MAYS *exchange glances and smile.* ANN *hands* RODERICK *one letter.* RODERICK *pauses, looking at the handwriting, then opens it slowly.*]

MRS. M. Come now and eat your supper, darling.

[ANN *unceremoniously thrusts the rest of the letters into* RODERICK'S *hand and goes to the table. She sits in her little chair and* MRS. MAYS *ties on her bib. She is very motherly with* ANN.]

MRS. M. Eat nicely, darling. Don't spill. Did the letter come, Roderick?

ROD. [*Absently*] No.

MRS. M. I thought as much. These funds people give to enlarge professors' salaries only go to the salaries that are already large. The little ones stay where they are or shrink.

[RODERICK *does not answer, absorbed in the letter.* MRS. MAYS, *sitting beside* ANN *goes on with her work.*]

MRS. M. The Universities need the underpaid and overworked professors to keep them out of debt. I know.

[*The clock strikes six.*]

ANN. [*Jubilantly*] It's six o'clock, fadie. And I am six. Isn't that funny?

[RODERICK *does not answer.*]

ANN. [*Imperiously*] Fadie!

ROD. What dear?

ANN. Fadie! It's six o'clock and I am six!

ROD. O yes. Very funny. Have you finished your supper, Ann?

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ANN. [*Whimpering*] No, I want it.

[MRS. M. *puts the tray back. Ann begins to eat. She soon puts down her spoon with a bored expression.*]

ROD. There now. That's enough, isn't it?

[*He picks* ANN *up and holds her in his lap. She puts her head down wearily.*]

MRS. M. [*Looking down at her*] Perfectly exhausted.

[IMOGENE *comes in at right.*]

IM. Yo wan' me to put Ann ter bed, Mr. Roderick?

ROD. It's still a little early, Imogene. She'll wake up so early if she goes now.

IM. She alf asleep now.

ROD. I know. But I want her to stay here a little longer.

IM. I doubt she sick, Mr. Roderick. A party dis afternoon an runnin away like dat.

ANN. [*Sitting up suddenly*] I am *not* sick, Imogene.

IM. If she don't come up now, I can't wait in ter put er ter bed.

ROD. [*Placidly*] O *that's* the trouble. I'll put her to bed myself. And I'll get dinner when I'm ready. You needn't mind.

ANN. [*Sitting up again*] I can put myself to bed now, can't I fadie?

ROD. Yes. Ann can put herself to bed now, Imogene.

IM. [*Very scornful*] All right, Mr. Roderick.

[*She goes out abruptly at right.*]

MRS. M. [*After a moment, making sure that* ANN *has dropped off*] Imogene is growing into a regular problem, isn't she?

ROD. She is.

MRS. M. They all do. There's one thing worse than having them leave and that is to have them stay on.

ROD. I believe you're right. The only way I can get rid

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ROD. [*His arms tightening about* ANN] Why not? I've always looked after Ann.

MRS. M. I know, but you're away at your work, hours at a time.

ROD. But Ann's begun to go to school and I'm always home to lunch.

MRS. M. No. Don't Roderick. Why will you always think you can take all the care of the child?

ROD. [*With sudden bitterness*] Well, I may not be allowed to keep her anyway.

MRS. M. What do you mean? There's something the matter! Has that—

[ANN *sits bolt upright.*]

ROD. Ann dear, let's see how big a girl you are. Let's see if you can go upstairs and undress by yourself.

[ANN *solemnly nods.*]

ROD. Now kiss Aunt Ann goodnight and thank her for all your lovely things.

[ANN *goes slowly to her Aunt and kisses her.*]

ROD. Thank you, Aunt Ann—

ANN. Thank you, Aunt Ann—

ROD. For my nice presents—

ANN. [*Perfunctorily*] For-my-nice-presents. Aunt Ann, I want to take my new doll to bed wif me.

MRS. M. Do, dear.

ROD. Run and get it.

[ANN *gets the doll slowly.*]

MRS. M. What are you going to name your doll?

ANN. Cyrilla.

[MRS. MAYS *glances quickly at* RODERICK.]

MRS. M. Cyrilla?

ANN. That was my muvver's name. I think it's pretty. Don't you?

ROD. Now run upstairs. And when you're undressed call me.

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ROD. Birthdays only come once a year. Baths every night.

ANN. [*Yawning*] I wish it was the oder way.

ROD. I find this arrangement more restful. I think I shall continue it. Run along.

[ANN *goes slowly toward the hall-door. She sees her little suit-case and takes it along.*]

ANN. I wish my muvver would come and see me. Fadie, would my muvver make me take bafs?

ROD. [*Firmly*] Yes. Of course.

ANN. Then I hope she won't come. [*At the door*] I think my muvver is very tall and wears a hat wif fevvers on it. Sometime, I think I will go and see my muvver.

ROD. And leave poor fadie?

ANN. [*Her little face softening at once*] O fadie, you must come too. [*She runs back to him.* RODERICK *conducts her firmly to the stairs.*]

ROD. Now let me see you go up.

[ANN *goes slowly upstairs with her burdens.* RODERICK *watches her progress.*]

ANN. [*Triumphantly, from above*] I'm up.

[*He comes back into the room.*]

MRS. M. Roderick, it's uncanny.

ROD. [*After a minute*] When I found her this afternoon, she was going to take the train. She was going to see her mother.

MRS. M. Roderick!

ROD. It was all right. The station master is a good friend of hers. He had her in charge.

MRS. M. I don't see how you could ever talk to the child about her. It would never have occurred to me.

ROD. We agree to differ on that point.

MRS. M. But now this running away. Some day she'll do it.

[RODERICK'S *face twitches.*]

ROD. What are you going to do? She found other

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she is. So now she's all the time playing things about her mother.

MRS. M. I had no idea about all this! You never told me. I would never have given her that little bag if I had known.

ROD. Aunt Ann, do you think it's strange I'm a little shy about mentioning Cyrilla to you?

MRS. M. [*With a dry laugh*] No. I suppose it isn't.

[*There is a long pause.* MRS. MAYS *sews.* RODERICK *smokes.*]

MRS. M. Roderick, she's in New York.

ROD. I know it.

MRS. M. She is the greatest possible success. Everybody is talking about her since she appeared in Tosca, I think it was. Though, of course, American singers haven't the same standing as European.

ROD. Not in advertising. They sing as well. Better.

MRS. M. Have you heard her?

[*He shakes his head.*]

MRS. M. I spent yesterday at the lawyer's—your uncle's affairs again. [*She sighs.*] In the waiting-room, two women were talking about Cyrilla. I don't know who they were. But they were enthusiastic. That's a great deal from women. If it had been a tenor, I'd have expected it.

ROD. I thought she would succeed.—Tell me about Uncle? How is he?

MRS. M. Just the same. It's going to be a long thing, Roderick.

ROD. And the business?

MRS. M. Hopeless. Hopeless. You've simply no idea what he has been doing with his affairs. It's awful. To tell the truth, I'm frightened. I'm a poor woman now, Roderick.

ROD. O I can't have you go through this after

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ROD. Aunt Ann, when *he* goes, you'll come to me.

MRS. M. O Roderick dear, that's looking far ahead. But I will. Gladly. Thankfully.

[*They both pause.*]

ROD. [*Suddenly*] Read this.

[MRS. MAYS *takes the letter he hands her and glances at it.*]

MRS. M. [*With vehemence*] When did you get this?

ROD. [*Quickly*] Just now.

MRS. M. Why—why didn't you tell me?

ROD. Haven't I?

[MRS. MAYS *reads in silence.*]

ROD. Well. What do you think of it?

MRS. M. I think it's preposterous! Insufferable! Of course you will take no notice of it.

ROD. That's just what I don't know.

MRS. M. [*Leaning forward*] Roderick. Be careful. She will have the child kidnapped. Go to your lawyer. Take every precaution.

[RODERICK *looks dubious.*]

MRS. M. Surely you won't hesitate?

ROD. Yes. Frankly, I do.

MRS. M. But why—for heaven's sake! The woman divorced you,—left the child in your hands.

ROD. I know, but—

MRS. M. But *what?*

ROD. But after all she's the mother.

MRS. M. Fiddlestick!

ROD. Hardly.

MRS. M. That's so like her. To repudiate a trouble, a nuisance. And now she wants a plaything!—But surely you're not thinking of letting her have the child?

ROD. [*After a pause*] No. She ought not to have the child.

MRS. M. I'm glad you are fixed on that point. She has forfeited the right—

ROD. Not the right to see the child.

MRS. M. It was folly to allow it. Besides, not to put

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too fine a point upon it,—she can have children whenever she wants them.

ROD. Aunt Ann!

MRS. M. Don't Aunt Ann me. And don't be shocked. It's the truth. Everyone knows what she is. [*Leaning forward*] Roderick, you surely know the scandal that went on the year and a half you were married to her?

ROD. Yes. I do.

MRS. M. She refers here to some promise.

ROD. I promised her that she was free to come back whenever she chose—

MRS. M. [*Amazed*] You did!

ROD. That was before I knew. Of course when I found out what her conduct had been, I felt I was released. But she will think otherwise.

MRS. M. How on earth did you come to make such an insane promise?

ROD. Aunt Ann, we can't discuss this. I cared for Cyrilla then.

MRS. M. Yes. You did. I never knew how much till the break came.

ROD. Besides, there is no getting round it,—she is the mother of this child.

MRS. M. [*With great bitterness*] There are mothers and mothers. Or I *should* say, mothers and *no* mothers. The fact that a woman can bear children is no proof of motherliness. It's merely a natural phenomenon. And it is ridiculous that this woman should suddenly ask for a child she's neglected for six years. And from the man she injured.

[*She rises and walks about.*]

MRS. M. Roderick, will you or will you not make up your mind to pay no attention to this?

[RODERICK *does not answer.*]

MRS. M. Then all we've succeeded in doing, so far, is to make conversation. Why did you show me that letter if you won't do as I say?

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ROD. Of course I ought to decide these things for myself.

MRS. M. You can't. Old association is too strong. It's the same with me, Roderick. Loyalty is in our blood. But in this case, your duty is perfectly plain, and I want to back you up in it. I'm afraid to leave you. I don't know what mad thing you'll do the moment I turn my back.

ROD. [*After a moment*] You needn't be afraid, Aunt Ann. That child and I have not been separated a night or a day since her mother left the house.

MRS. M. I know it. And it's wonderful!

ROD. O no.

MRS. M. It is wonderful to me, my dear boy.

ROD. No. It isn't. Little Ann has come to be the great interest of my life. It's true,—nothing, no work, can take the place of it. And that's why Cyrilla will never get her back.

MRS. M. Thank God. [*She kisses him warmly.*] My dear child. I can leave you now with a free mind. Good gracious, it's late. Your uncle will be looking for me. [*She hurries to put up her work.*]

ROD. I only wish I could see you home.

MRS. M. Don't think of it. I like the way fair Imogene goes off every evening and leaves you to do her work.

ROD. [*Bringing her coat*] I'm used to it. But I don't like to have you walking home in the dark.

MRS. M. Don't worry about it, Roderick. It's such a short way. And like you, I'm getting used to it.

[*They go to the outer door as they talk and* RODERICK *opens it for* MRS. MAYS. *They stand on the threshold talking a moment, then* MRS. MAYS *goes out and* RODERICK *closes the door.*]

ROD. [*At the foot of the stairs*] Ann!

ANN. [*Above*] What?

ROD. Are you undressing?

ANN. [*Very slowly*] No.

ROD. What are you doing?

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ANN. Playing.

ROD. What are you playing, Ann? Where are you?

ANN. I'm looking out of the window. I'm playing about what I see in the garden.

ROD. Ann, stop playing. Now undress. Do as you're told. Fadie's going to start his dinner. Then he's coming up. Do you hear me?

ANN. [*Very unwilling*] Yes—fadie.

[*Her voice dies away.* RODERICK *comes into the study, turns on the light, takes down a smoking-jacket and puts it on. He puts on a pair of slippers. With his pipe relighted, he goes off at right, the picture of a worn instructor of American youth. When he is gone,* ANN *is seen running down the stairs. She peers through the lights on either side of the front door. Then, with some difficulty, she turns the handle and opens the door wide. She ushers in* CYRILLA.

CYRILLA *is now gorgeously artificial. She does indeed wear a hat with plumes, as* ANN *has imagined. She wears a handsome fur stole and jewelled chains, and her hands, when she removes her gloves, glitter with jewels. She is the epitome of fashion. Her face is painted, but skilfully. Her eyebrows are shaped and pencilled into an exquisite arch. She wears orchids. Altogether she more than fulfils* ANN'S *dream.* ANN *stands staring at her and she stands gazing down at* ANN *for a moment.*]

CYR. [*In an artificial and melodious voice*] Does Mr. Roderick Scarsdale live here?

[ANN *nods her head.*]

CYR. [*After a pause*] Are you Mr. Scarsdale's little girl?

[ANN *nods again.*]

CYR. Is—Mr. Scarsdale at home?

[ANN *nods again.*]

CYR. [*Winningly*] May I come in?

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ANN *runs quickly and shoves out the big chair, completely disappearing as she does so.* CYRILLA *graciously sits.*]

CYR. Thank you. And where are you going to sit?

[ANN *runs and pushes up her little chair. They sit facing each other.* CYRILLA *finally appears a little embarrassed under the child's scrutiny.*]

CYR. Where is your father, little Ann?

ANN. [*Surprised into speech*] How do you know my name?

[CYRILLA *is taken aback. Tears come into her eyes.*]

CYR. I—I have known your father a long time.

ANN. Did you know me?

[CYRILLA *cannot answer.*]

ANN. You're my muvver, aren't you?

CYR. [*Her voice vanishing*] Yes.

ANN. I knew you'd come.

CYR. Did you? How did you know?

ANN. Fadie told me about you. And I make stories about you. [*She speaks with the surprised confidence of a little girl who has made a very nice friend.*]

CYR. What—what were the stories?

ANN. That you would come and see me. And then—that I would go and see you.

CYR. [*Suddenly wiping her eyes*] That is very right. So father talked to you about me.

[ANN *nods.*]

CYR. So you did not forget me.

[ANN *shakes her head.*]

CYR. That was very good of father wasn't it?

ANN. Yes.

CYR. You love father?

ANN. Yes.

CYR. Father's very good to you?

ANN. Yes.

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CYR. Do you like it?

ANN. Yes.

[*She leans rather heavily on Cyrilla as she plays with the chain.* CYRILLA *draws away a little, unaccustomed to having her finery mussed.* ANN *touches the flowers.*]

ANN. What are those?

CYR. They are called orchids. So you would like to come and visit me.

[ANN *nods.*]

CYR. Do you know where I live?

[ANN *shakes her head.*]

CYR. I am living in New York now.

ANN. Are you?

CYR. That is not far away, is it?

ANN. No. Fadie took me to New York once. Do you live in a house?

CYR. No. I have an apartment in a hotel.

ANN. Where is that?

CYR. On Fifth Avenue.

ANN. I know where that is. That is where the circus parade was.

CYR. There are many beautiful parades on Fifth Avenue. You can see them all from my rooms.

ANN. [*Shyly*] I think I would like to go to your house.

CYR. You would? I came here to ask father if he would let you visit me?

ANN. [*Suddenly a little appalled*] Did you?

[*She draws away a trifle.*]

CYR. Yes. When would you like to come?

ANN. [*Shyly*] I don't know.

CYR. Shall we ask father?

[ANN *nods.*]

ANN. [*After a minute*] Why didn't you come to see me sooner?

CYR. Because, dear, I have been across the sea. In Paris. For many years.

ANN. Is Paris as nice as New York?

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CYR. It is nicer.

ANN. Do they have parades in Paris?

CYR. Sometimes. But they have a place for children to play. It is called the Tuileries Gardens. It has a big fountain where all the girls and boys sail little boats. And there are many little booths—

ANN. What is that?

CYR. Little houses that can be set up and taken down very easily. Where they have children's toys. And little theatres for Punch and Judy. And the men sell colored balloons there. And little airships.

[ANN *is listening intently, lost to the world.*]

CYR. Would you like to see the Tuileries Gardens?

[ANN *nods. At this moment,* RODERICK *opens the door at right and sees them. He stands stock still, until first* ANN *turns, then* CYRILLA.]

CYR. [*Rising; gloriously at her ease*] Why Roderick. I did not hear you! Ann has been entertaining me.

[ANN *slips her hand into* CYRILLA'*s hand.*]

ANN. Aren't you going to say anything to my muvver, fadie?

ROD. How do you do, Cyrilla.—Ann!

ANN. Yes, fadie?

ROD. [*Sternly*] Come here. [ANN *goes to him.*] I told you to go to bed long ago.

[ANN *hangs her head.*]

ROD. [*Very gently*] Now run upstairs to bed. Will you?

[ANN *nods.*]

ROD. Kiss me goodnight.

[ANN *kisses him.*]

ANN. And must I have a baf tonight, fadie?

ROD. Not tonight. It's too late now.

ANN. O goody!

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tinues to stand, though CYRILLA *sits in the big chair.*]

CYR. You got my letter?

ROD. I did. But only just.

CYR. I couldn't wait.

ROD. You have waited nearly six years, however.

CYR. Making a career.—You don't seem awfully pleased to see me.

ROD. Why should I be?

CYR. I don't know. You used to care for me.

[*She is provocative as only a well-dressed woman who is sure of herself can be.*]

ROD. [*Pale*] I am afraid that *used* is the word.

CYR. Well? How about it? You remember your promise?

ROD. Yes. I do.

CYR. Are you willing to keep it?

[RODERICK *takes a turn through the room.*]

ROD. I told you you were free to come back. That was my promise. There is only one thing you would come back for,—to a place like this.—What do you propose to do?

CYR. I can do a great deal for the child now.

[RODERICK *says nothing.*]

CYR. More than you could *ever* do.

[RODERICK *looks at her, but says nothing.*]

CYR. I could even help *you.*—O talk, Roderick! You haven't changed a bit, have you?

ROD. As I understand it from your letter, you want to have Ann with you?

CYR. I do.

ROD. I made no promise of that kind, you know.

CYR. You told me I was free to come back whenever I chose. On account of the baby. I said I didn't choose to be tied. You said sometime I might want to be. I remember every word you said. The time has come. I do want to be tied. Now it stands to reason I can't live *here* any more. And I can give the child untold advantages. It is for the child's sake after all—

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ROD. I'm sorry, but I can't recognize a promise of *any* kind any more.

CYR. [*With sarcasm*] O? Why is that?

ROD. If I had known then what I know now—I would never have made it.

CYR. Well? What was that?

ROD. You needn't ask me. You know.

CYR. All the same—I am the child's mother. And in those days you recognized that.

ROD. And I now recognize that you are a very successful opera-singer.

CYR. [*Her lips tightening*] I'm glad it appears so.

ROD. Well, it's so, isn't it?

CYR. [*Shaking one foot to and fro*] No.]*With rage*[No! No! [*She speaks hoarsely.*]

ROD. Why not?

CYR. O you in America! You don't appreciate your own. Cheap! Common! You buy art as you buy clothes. No feeling. No instinct! Nothing but the coarse vulgar demand for money and to get ahead. Any fool with an Italian name and a cracked voice, women who *are never heard* in Europe, can take precedent here in New York of an artist like me! And I *am* an artist. The Paris public recognized it. Fool that I was to come here— [*She is on the point of tears.*] And I want the child. If I don't have the child I shall go mad.

ROD. We've got to consider the child first.

CYR. Who could consider the child now, better than I? I can afford it! You can't!

ROD. There are other considerations than money. I told you I could not keep any promise to you.

CYR. I wonder what is tormenting that conscience of yours? There's something I don't get. Tell me, what is this thing that makes you the soul of honor, break your

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were still married. And you think it was something I did while we were married? Of course! Listen, Roderick. You used to tell me I was honest. [*He nods.*] Well, that is my nature. I have learned to lie. O yes! With the best of the crew! But I was always honest with you. I am honest now. Will you believe me?

ROD. Yes.

CYR. While we were married, I encouraged old Manstrom.—Poor old Manstrom!—I did it because I felt I ought. It was good business. But while I was under this roof there was nothing between us. Nothing but talk. I was afraid at the time it might reach you. And I knew gossip would stretch it as far as possible. It did, didn't it?

ROD. [*Nods*] Yes.

CYR. I've thought of that since. Do you believe what I've told you?

ROD. [*Turning to her*] I do.

[RODERICK *looks greatly relieved. The muscles of his face relax suddenly.*]

CYR. Very well then. The promise holds.

[RODERICK *winces.*]

CYR. It does, doesn't it?

ROD. We've got to be practical. A child can't suddenly be taken away from the only parent she has known and put into the arms of a woman she doesn't remember.

CYR. You talked to her of me. She said so.

ROD. I thought it was only right—

CYR. [*Smiling*] Still a man of principle. [*Gravely*] I told you before I left there weren't many men like you. I've found that true enough. Tell me, Roderick, how are you getting on?

ROD. As you see.

CYR. Haven't they raised you yet at that rotten University?

ROD. No.

CYR. On my account?

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thought of you here. He said the students were wild about you.

ROD. [*Sighing humorously*] Yes. I have some snap courses like the others.

CYR. It was more than that. This man was at the Beaux Arts. He said he couldn't be grateful enough to you for what you had taught him. He really had learned something. It shows in Paris, you know, what a man has had when he comes over. It's a shame. A rotten shame. Tell me, doesn't Mrs. Mays help out or—

ROD. She can't.

CYR. Why not?

ROD. Her money's gone. That husband of hers muddled it all away. And now he's an invalid on her hands.

CYR. [*Bursting out*] That a good man like you—! O, it's true in this world. Virtue is certainly its *own* reward. It never has any other. Roderick, let me take the child and educate her.

[RODERICK *gives a fearful start which he suppresses.*]

CYR. You said we must be practical. You've got to think of her if you won't think of yourself. She's a charming child. She ought to have the best. You can't do anything. Tied by the leg.

[RODERICK *winces.*]

CYR. And it's my fault. I see it.

[*A long pause.*]

CYR. [*Hoarsely*] And anyway I want her! I must have her! I've got to have my child. I've got to have something as the years go on. Faced with this horrible disappointment. I can't stand it.

ROD. What disappointment. What do *you* know about it?

CYR. [*Leaning forward*] A good deal more than you will ever know. I've succeeded, with the public. And now I'm held back. By rotten politics. By rotten envy. By your

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ROD. Answer me one question. Why don't you marry again?

CYR. I? Marry? The men I meet? [*She throws back her head and laughs.*]

ROD. O stop. You could if you liked.

CYR. [*Shortly*] No.—Now are you going to let me have her?

ROD. It isn't possible.

CYR. You will condemn that child to poverty and a poor social position, because of your principles.

ROD. There are things worse than poverty. [*He looks* CYRILLA *in the eye. Her lids droop.*] And as for social position, mine is safe at any rate.

CYR. [*Quietly*] Safe and dull. She'll have a dull time of it, Roderick. Young people need fun and change, and yes,—they do need experience. Perhaps if you had had more, Roddy, things would have turned out differently.

ROD. You will be surprised to hear that I am satisfied.

CYR. Well. There's no making you out. You don't seem to want the things other people want at all. *And*—I like you the better for it! All the same, think of what I say. You can't turn aside what might be a chance for Ann.

ROD. You've got to give me time to work this out.

CYR. I can't give you more than a week. We're going to the Coast very soon.

ROD. And you'd drag the child out there?

CYR. O no. She could come back here, while I'm travelling, I suppose. Couldn't she? She'd be in the way on a journey.

ROD. Cyrilla, you don't want the child.

CYR. You can't pay for her. I can.

ROD. But to let her go on this uncertain basis!

CYR. Let her visit me then.

ROD. She's so little. And never been away. She's got

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ROD. Take her out of school now? We've got to wait till summer.

CYR. No. Now!

ROD. I've got to have two days to think it over.

CYR. [*Rising*] It won't be safe to give you time. You'll be consulting Aunt Ann.

ROD. Are you out of your senses! What do you know about children?

CYR. I know this. That the child has dreamed about me all these years. She told me so when I came in. She looks to me as if I were her goddess. She longs to be with me.

ROD. [*Violently*] Drag a child away to New York at this time of night? I won't have it! She's my child. The law gave her to me.

CYR. And allowed me freedom in seeing her.

ROD. I will say nothing further about it. She's sound asleep by now—

[ANN, *with hat and coat on, with her suit-case in one hand and her doll in the other, is seen descending the stairs.*]

ANN. [*Entering. To* CYRILLA] I think I will go with you tonight.

CYR. [*Triumphantly*] There! You see?

ROD. Ann, you can't—

CYR. [*Taking* ANN's *hand*] Only a visit. You would like to go? How dear! The little bag and all.

ANN. [*Correcting her*] *Suit-case.*

ROD. And you want to go with her, Ann? And leave fadie all alone?

[ANN *nods her head.*]

CYR. There's nothing more to be said. Let her go.

ROD. It is against everything in me—

CYR. O nonsense. It's only for a few days. Overnight perhaps. Don't make such a mountain.

ROD. Cyrilla, this *is* only for overnight. Where are you stopping?

CYR. At the Plaza. Now come, dear. Say goodnight.

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ANN. Goodbye, fadie.

RODD. [*Hoarsely*] Goodbye, Ann. Will you come back in the morning?

ANN. [*Quickly realizing the long night is ahead*] O yes!

[*They go toward the hall.*]

CYR. Come along. Mademoiselle is in the car. She will take care of you.

[*They open the door and go out. The door closes after them.* RODERICK *stands paralyzed. Then he runs after them, tears the door open and stands staring out into the darkness. The wind blows through the room, disturbing the papers and blowing them about.* RODERICK *walks rapidly to and fro. Then he suddenly sinks into the big chair, his head in his hands.*

[*Suddenly, little* ANN *runs in at the door and rushes to him. She is whimpering, and at the sight of him she bursts into tears, throws her doll and the suit-case on the floor and climbs up on his lap. His arms tighten about her at once.*[

ANN. [*Sobbing*] Fadie, I runned away. I runned away. Fadie, fadie, I want to stay with *you!*—

[CURTAIN]

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GAME!

Comedy in Three Acts

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CAST

CLARENCE BUELL, *an American Scientist.*

MARY BUELL, *his wife.*

SIR GILBERT PRICE, *an English gentleman connected with the English legation in Vienna.*

SONYA, *his foreign wife.*

GRIGGS, *his English valet.*

MARIE, *his wife's English maid.*

REV. EZRA SIMPSON, *Clarence's uncle, pastor of the New Church at Georgetown Corners, Mass.*

MR. GRAVES, *an Englishman*
M. CLÉMENT, *a Frenchman* } *Uncle Ezra's friends in Paris.*

MADAME MONTERINI, *Swiss landlady*

ROSA, *her Italian maid*

Place: Acts I and II—A Swiss Pension in the Italian Alps.
Act III—A hotel in Paris.

Time: The summer of 1914.

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GAME!

ACT I.

Scene: A room on the lower floor of a Swiss pension. The room is plainly furnished. It is a sitting-room. At the back are French windows, which lead out onto a low terrace or veranda, and that in turn leads into a small garden, which has a gate onto the street. There is a view across the garden and across the street to high and snow-covered peaks. There is a door into the hallway down left.

When the curtain rises, a gentleman is discovered sitting on a trunk, the cover of which is askew and some of the contents of which are strewn on the floor. Before him, talking to him with great earnestness, is a plain man, evidently his servant.

SIR GILBERT PRICE *(the gentleman on the trunk) is a delicate featured, exquisitely precise Englishman in middle life. His clothes are only conspicuous because they are elegant and at the same time do not obtrude themselves, or in any way divert our attention from his face, which is charming, quizzical and yet sympathetic.*

GRIGGS, *his valet, is a nondescript man, youngish, and with that air of helpless refinement some English servants have. One cannot see* GRIGGS *outside his setting as a valet.*

GRIGGS. [*Evidently continuing*] And I feel it's only fair to old England to go back, Sir Gilbert.

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SIR G. You will enlist?

GRIGGS. I 'ad it in mind, Sir Gilbert, if they'll take me.

SIR G. It is obviously your duty to go.

GRIGGS. That's the way I look at it, Sir Gilbert.

SIR G. Well. Having decided that, you had best go. Now, without delay.

[GRIGGS *continues to stand where he is.*]

SIR G. Why don't you go?

GRIGGS. O, first I must clear you up, Sir Gilbert.

SIR G. [*Rising, speaking seriously*] No, Griggs. I'll have to learn to clear myself up, sooner or later. Better sooner.

GRIGGS. But, Sir Gilbert, you don' know a thing about putting away an' as fer foldin'—

SIR G. [*Waving him off*] Never mind, never mind. If I can't fold myself or put myself away, I shall have to take the consequences.

GRIGGS. O don't be down-'earted, Sir Gilbert. If it's as bad as all that *I won't go*—

SIR G. Man, the Germans are driving through Belgium.

GRIGGS. [*Obedient but doubtful*] Yes, Sir Gilbert.

[*He turns as if to go, but turns back at once.*]

GRIGGS. At least lemme repair the box, Sir Gilbert, that beast of a cabby broke for us—

SIR G. Go!

GRIGGS. [*Quite severely for* GRIGGS] Now, Sir Gilbert, you'll never be gettin' these thing straight by yerself. I can't go yet.

SIR G. Perhaps my wife may turn up. I'll ask her to help me!

GRIGGS. [*With real horror*] Lady Price,—O no, Sir Gilbert!

SIR G. It may be the chance of a lifetime to teach her [illegible]se of order.

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GRIGGS. [*With studied contempt*] Don't know, Sir Gilbert. Off walkin' over the 'ills, I dare say. 'Eard 'er talkin' about the beautiful mountings when we'd 'ardly got out of the train.

SIR G. If that's the case, there's no knowing when she'll be back.

GRIGGS. No, Sir Gilbert. She won't be back.

SIR G. You're very sure, Griggs.

GRIGGS. One can never be sure a the 'abits a furriners, Sir Gilbert.

SIR G. She's not a foreigner, Griggs. She's my wife. Been so for fifteen years.

GRIGGS. [*Folding*] Yes, Sir Gilbert.

SIR G. You never got used to it, did you! In all these years.

GRIGGS. [*Folding*] What, Sir Gilbert?

SIR G. Her being a foreigner.

GRIGGS. O she's your wife, Sir Gilbert.

SIR G. Well, I never got used to it, either.

GRIGGS. O Sir Gilbert!

SIR G. That's just what I like about it, Griggs. Never being used to it.

GRIGGS. You will in time, Sir Gilbert.

[SIR GILBERT *pleasantly shakes his head.*]

SIR G. How very like you to spoil it, Griggs. [*Suddenly aware of* GRIGG'S *labors*] Here! Here! Drop it, I say!

GRIGGS. Yes, Sir Gilbert. In a moment, Sir Gilbert.

SIR G. That's enough, Griggs. I really mean it. I discharge you!

GRIGGS. [*His face suddenly beginning to work*] O you don' mean that, Sir Gilbert!

SIR G. No, I don't. But you *are* discharged, all the same. History has discharged you. History has made a soldier of you. Very likely, if you hadn't said you must go, I'd have kept you from habit. The habit of not knowing how to dress myself, what to eat and when to eat it. Absurd. All this must be changed. Go now, Griggs. Goodbye.

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[*They shake hands with an emotion, which neither will give way to.*]

SIR G. [*Walking away, speaking quietly*] I shall manage, Griggs. Drop me a line how you go on. I shall reach England as soon as ever I can.

GRIGGS. Yes, sir.

[*He waits a moment, then turns, crosses the terrace and the garden and disappears out of the gate.* SIR GILBERT, *seating himself again on the broken trunk, watches him go off. He muses in silence. Off left, a tremendous chattering in Italian is suddenly heard. Some one is talking in an Italian dialect, broadly and volubly. Enter the maid,* ROSA, *followed by* MARY BUELL *at left.*

MARY BUELL *is a slender well-built young American woman, dressed plainly in travelling clothes and a plain hat devoid of the slightest coquetry, and wearing spectacles with tortoise-shell rims. But in spite of the spectacles, in spite of the clothes,* MARY BUELL *has charm. She carries a suit-case in one hand, a leather manuscript case in the other.*

ROSA *is a healthy peasant girl, dressed in peasant's clothes adapted for housework. She is not very tidy, but she is distinctly cheerful.*

MARY. [*Stopping short, trying to back out*] O this is not the room, I am sure.

ROS. [*Nodding vigorously*] Ye-es. Ye-es. [*She points to* SIR GILBERT.]

MARY. [*To* ROSA] You speak English?

ROS. [*Proudly*] O ye-es!

MARY. This is some one else's room!

ROS. [*Shaking her head violently*] You wan'—you wan' —'osban'? [*She points violently to* SIR GILBERT, *who turns slowly.*]

MARY. [*Hastily*] No. Not my husband.

ROS. [*To* SIR GILBERT] 'Ere. 'Ere. Wi-ife.

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Ros. Ye-es. You wan' wi-fe. 'Ere. 'Ere. [*She pushes* MARY *forward.*]

Ros. [*Laughing delightedly*] O Ye-es. Ye-es. Wi-ife wan' 'osban'. 'Osban' wan' wi-ife. O ye-es. I spik Eengleesh.

[*She goes out laughing and pleased with herself, and bangs the door behind her.* MARY *and* SIR GILBERT *confront each other. They begin to smile.*]

SIR G. Well. At least we are introduced.

MARY. Isn't it a little strange we never met before?

SIR G. I am most happy to make your acquaintance.

MARY. Thank you. And I yours.—Our landlady seems to be away.

SIR G. O yes. Like everyone else, she is gaping about town for news.

MARY. That is what my husband is doing.

SIR G. My wife is climbing mountains.

MARY. [*Cheerfully*] Very well. Then we must put up with each other.

SIR G. [*Gallantly*] More difficult for you than for me.

MARY. [*Pointing to the trunk*] Your trunk seems out of commission.

SIR G. Yes. The cabmen have gone mad like the rest of the world.

MARY. While we are waiting, suppose I help?

SIR G. [*Overcome*] O I wouldn't think of it.

MARY. [*With solicitude*] You are stepping into a perfectly clean handkerchief.

SIR G. [*Stepping off*] So I am. [*He picks it up.*]

SIR G. And I ought to put things rights for you,—for this is certainly not my room. My valet ordered rooms up one flight.

MARY. Then this must be ours. The rooms I engaged were on the first floor.

SIR G. O dear, dear! I beg your pardon.

[*He begins stuffing things wildly into the broken trunk.*]

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MARY. O no, no, no! Don't do that! Everything will be ruined.

SIR G. But I cannot allow you—

MARY. O please!

[*She begins folding and packing with great neatness and ten times the speed of* GRIGGS. SIR GILBERT *stands by and marvels.*]

SIR G. [*Suddenly, after he has watched* MARY *for a while with the greatest surprise*] What a very remarkable person you are! I never saw a pair of hands work so fast.

MARY. They have to. To keep up.

SIR G. With whom, may I ask?

MARY. My husband. My husband is remarkable if you like.

SIR G. Ah. A superman.

MARY. [*Pausing and looking up*] He was meant to be. But so far he is only a great problem.

SIR G. I believe all husbands are that?

MARY. Yes. And it's the study of my life to find out why.

SIR G. [*Settling again on the top of the trunk*] This is very interesting.

MARY. Please move.

[SIR GILBERT *dismounts wonderingly.* MARY *takes off her shoe and with the heavy flat heel bangs a nail into the trunk.*]

MARY. There! That will answer to hold until you get upstairs.

SIR G. By Jove! I never thought of that! I might have done it for myself!

MARY. O no. Not you. But your wife would have when she came.

SIR G. On that point I can absolutely refute you.

MARY. [*Continuing to work*] Given you up, I suppose?

SIR G. No. We have never given each other up. Not in fifteen years. [*He sits again on the trunk.*]

[MARY *pauses in her folding, her arms outstretched.*]

MARY. Not in fifteen years. I've only been married two.

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SIR G. One gets used to it in time.

MARY. Does one?

SIR G. Yes. Not to each other. But to it. To get used to each other would be fatal.

MARY. [*Giving up work*] I never thought of that.

SIR G. One should never get used to each other. And one should always keep trying.

MARY. That means I suppose that one at least should be superhuman.

SIR G. Yes. One should be superhuman and the other should be a problem. *Should* I say. I don't say *is*.

MARY. And the solving of the problem is what keeps one going.

SIR G. Exactly.

MARY. [*Beginning to work again*[I'm going to think about that. Your socks are in a frightful condition.

SIR G. Are they?

MARY. Your wife is evidently not superhuman.

SIR G. I can never make up my mind whether she is, or whether she is the problem.

MARY. And you didn't know your own socks were full of holes?

SIR G. No. You are shocked. You will probably be more so when you hear I have always been tended by a valet. He threw away my old socks and bought me new.

MARY. Waste.

SIR G. Yes that is the way the world has been getting on hitherto.

[MARY *takes off her hat and puts it on the table. She has blonde hair, not brilliant, but fine and soft with an inclination to curl about the temples and the nape of the neck. It is harmoniously done and the shape of her head is good. She finds a little perfectly equipped sewing-case in her bag, and sitting on the other end of the trunk, starts in on the socks.*]

MARY. You know I like it!

SIR G. [*Startled*] What? Waste? You!

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MARY. Yes. Because it gives *me* so much to do.

SIR G. My dear young lady, you are a philosopher.

MARY. [*Honestly*] O no. I never took a philosophy course in college.

SIR G. [*Smiling gently*] No need. One should never study philosophy. Other people's theories are never important, any more than other people's experience can be used.

[*He is about to dilate on this subject when they are interrupted by loud and clamorous cries from* MADAME MONTERINI, *the landlady, who enters after a frantic knock.*]

MADAME MONTERINI *is a typical landlady and to be found in any country. She is rather colorless and fat, very neat and wears a wig.*

MADAME. O teese an outrage! Dat foolish maid! She put you een de wrong room. I will scold her well. It shall be made right. I will call and scold her. Eet iss an outrage. I cannot get over eet. Two strrangers! Een de same room. Dat girl ees—

SIR G. [*When he can interpose*] But my dear Madame, we are not strangers.

MAD. O you know each oder?

[*She regards them a little suspiciously.*]

MARY. [*Laughing*] Only for ten minutes.

MAD. [*Severely*] Dat girl shall move de trunk.

SIR G. I beg—

[ROSA *is dragged in by* MADAME. ROSA *is crying.*]

SIR G. O I cannot permit this.

[ROSA *wipes her tears off on her apron, and tackles the trunk. She lifts it with perfect ease just as* CLARENCE BUELL *enters at left.*]

CLARENCE BUELL *is a tall thin young man with even clear sharp features. He wears glasses. He is well if a trifle carelessly dressed and represents the new, not the old, professorial type. He is nervous and excitable, very evidently, and always*

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too intent on carrying out what he has on his mind at the moment.]

CLAR. [*At the door*] Here! Tell that girl to drop that thing!

ROSA. [*Indignantly*] He tink I kinnot! Huh!

[*She makes a grand sweep with the trunk and brushes* CLARENCE *out of the way as if he were so much down. They all stand flabbergasted for a moment.*]

SIR G. [*Exclaiming*] This is a form of pride unknown to me!

CLAR. Who's trunk is that?

SIR G. Mine.

CLAR. [*Looking at him with a suspicion of contempt.*] Well, I'll go that girl one better!

[*He dashes out, followed by* MADAME *and a great hubbub on the stairs is the result.*]

SIR G. [*Smiling, going to* MARY] I am deeply obliged. I shall look forward to meeting you again. I take it, that is your problem charging up the stairs with the trunk. I envy him. I have been a martyr to a bad heart. It seems I must only look on at life. And now at this crisis of the world's history, I shall be brushed aside. It is the hour for the young and strong,—

MARY. I am not sure. We never needed our minds so much—

SIR G. It is kind of you to say so, Mrs.—?

MARY. Buell. And you?

SIR G. My card. [*He takes out a card.*] Lady Price and I will be most happy to receive you. Now I must follow the commissariat.

[*He bows graciously as he passes* CLARENCE, *who regards him a little coldly.*]

CLAR. [*Coming down to* MARY] Who is that—guy?

MARY. Someone Madame put in here by mistake.

CLAR. O. Was it a mistake for you to be sitting on that trunk with him, mending his blame socks?

[MARY *laughs.*]

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MARY. Where were you?

CLAR. Coming in through the garden.

MARY. He is a very nice man. I take it he is even more than nice.

CLAR. [*Grumbling*] Considerably more.

MARY. [*Reading the card*] Sir Gilbert Price, English Legation, Vienna. A diplomat! I told you so.

CLAR. I'm not interested in titles.

MARY. What are you interested in just now? That telegram?

[*She puts out her hand.* CLARENCE *puts into it without question a telegram he has been holding.*]

MARY. [*Reading*] "Wire money if possible. Stranded in Paris. Need you. Uncle Ezra."

MARY. Are you going?

CLAR. Read this.

[*He hands her a letter.*]

MARY. [*Opening the letter, reads*] "Dear Clarence, I must have money. I cannot get home otherwise. Cannot you come to me? Your affectionate uncle, Ezra Simpson."

[*She pauses in thought.*]

MARY. The man's got to have money, I suppose.

CLAR. We haven't enough for ourselves. And no chance of *our* ever getting home. Curse this war. What shall I do?

MARY. You can wire the money. His congregation will have us lynched if we desert their pastor. The first thing is to find the American Express. Let me call Madame.

[*She finds a bell-cord and pulls it.* ROSA *appears.*]

MARY. [*Speaking distinctly and rather loud*] Please tell Madame Monterini I would like to speak with her.

CLAR. [*Seeing the girl does not understand; coming to the rescue*] Speak, you know! [*Pointing to his mouth*] Lips and tongue. Speak. E as in squeak—

MARY. O hush. She thinks you want beer.

[*Cheerfully*] Beer. Ye-es. I spik Engleesh.

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MARY. There now. She will probably bring a bottle of beer.

CLAR. That's what you said.

MARY. But you suggested it.

[*She pulls the cord.* ROSA *runs in again.*]

ROS. [*Cheerfully*] Madame Monterini she geta beer.

CLAR. and MARY. [*In several kinds of pantomime*] No, no, no. Madame Monterini—come here— [*They shake their heads.*] No beer! No beer!

ROS. You no wan' a beer?

CLAR. and MARY. NO!!

ROS. [*Shaking her head*] You no spik Eengleesh. I spik Eengleesh. O ye-es.

[ROSA *departs huffily.* MARY *and* CLARENCE *stand looking after her blankly.*]

MARY. [*Sighing*] We'll have to get on without Madame it seems. [*She takes an account-book from her bag.*] Yes. We've hardly got enough for ourselves. And the war will go on and on.

CLAR. I know. And I want to see it.

MARY. I know you do. And you will. But first you must finish your book. As your widow I must derive an income from it.

CLAR. You assume that I am going to get killed.

MARY. You might.

CLAR. You also assume that anybody can be induced to take an interest in the book.

MARY. I certainly do.

CLAR. You think anything I can do is an asset?

MARY. Yes.

CLAR. Then why didn't you say so sooner? In Egypt. In Syria. In Mesopotamia. You worked away, climbed rocks, kept government secrets and didn't mind the fleas. You are a perfect archaeologist, Mary. But you never allowed that I was.

MARY. I did frequently.

CLAR. No. You said: "O Clarence, that was clever of you." But never, "O Clarence! That was clever of you!!"

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MARY. If I had you might have sat down and admired yourself.

CLAR. Am I as bad as all that?

MARY. I don't know. I didn't give you the chance. —Now listen. Two things are clear. We must keep Uncle Ezra quiet by sending him money. And you must finish your book.

CLAR. Well—but I want to see this war.

MARY. Clarence, you know you always let today drive yesterday out of your head—

[*She is interrupted. Across the bright sunshine of the garden and terrace, there passes from the gate to the house a vision. A finely built woman, swarthy and black-eyed, springs with extraordinary grace up the steps of the terrace and is about to pass out of sight, into the house. She is clad in a single garment in the tunic style and her bare feet are encased in sandals.* CLARENCE *and* MARY *both start.*]

CLAR. Good Lord!

MARY. O!

[*The woman stops and looks into the room. She casts but a fleeting glance at* MARY, *then rivets a long and passionate gaze on* CLARENCE. *She disappears. There is a dead silence.*]

CLAR. Good God! Is that the way women dress here?

MARY. [*Judicially*] Well. I hardly think so. But if they do we'll have to get used to it.

CLAR. [*Positively*] I never shall.

MARY. [*Judicially*] Yes. I think you will.

CLAR. Good Lord! Who could she be anyhow?

MARY. I am going to ask Madame Monterini—

CLAR. [*Eagerly*] Yes do!

MARY. —about the American Express.

[MARY *turns toward the door left, Clarence at her heels.*]

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inclined to follow MARY. *Then he has another idea. He springs to the window and tries to look out without himself being seen, gives that up and impatiently steps out on the terrace, looking in the direction in which the strange woman has gone. Evidently he sees her, for he comes running back, closes the window, and comes down stage looking very uncomfortable.*

Reenter MARY *with* MADAME *who is carrying a tray with an open bottle of beer and two glasses and who is evidently protesting.* CLARENCE *detaches* MARY *from* MADAME.]

CLAR. I ran out and looked after that woman and will you believe it,—what did she do but turn and start to come back! Gee!

MARY. Don't worry. She'll stay away when she sees me. You don't happen to want any beer?

CLAR. Take it away. Madame—

MARY. [*Quickly*] Remember—American Express—

MADAME. [*Interupting*] But dat girl she say you wan' beer. An' I have open de bottle. Eet will spoil an' eet iss so—costly—an' now dis war have come—

MARY. [*Quietly going for her purse and paying* MADAME] I hope you will drink it yourself, Madame.

MADAME. I? O. Tank you. Very much. [*She is suddenly silenced; then exclaims*] But you pay for beer you do not drink? Ex-travagance!

MARY. We wanted—

MADAME. Dat ees so like de Americans. Dey trow away deyre money. Trow it out of de window—

MARY. We want to ask a question, Madame—

MAD. But pay for what you do not use! You do not know what eet iss to be poor. To save—

CLAR. [*Interposing*] O say! Madame!

MAD. [*Obedient to the voice of the male*] Monsieur?

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MAD. [*Looking terribly puzzled and turning to* MARY *for assistance*] Gal-op? I do not know what you say?

MARY. He means the foreign looking lady who came across the terrace, peculiarly dressed.

MAD. Dat? O. Dat iss de wi-ife of de Eenglish gentleman upstairs. She has very great rank in Volhynia. She iss 'ow you say, very—very cultured. An' spik Eenglish very well.

CLAR. Gee whillikins! Who'd a guessed it! I thought she'd just come out of the woods.

[MADAME *looks anxiously inquiring.*]

MARY. We have never seen anyone dressed like that before.

MAD. [*Exclaiming*] Iss not dat strange! So many people do eet 'ere. Dey walk airly in de dew wit bare feet. Eet iss for de healt'. De doctor, he sen' people 'ere.

CLAR. [*To* MARY] Lead me to him, Mary.

MARY. [*Quickly*] Madame, where is the American Express?

MAD. Am-erican Express. O. Eet iss là-bas. De tram-car will show you how.

MARY. [*Rapidly going for hat and gloves*] I will go.

CLAR. I will go. [*He goes for his hat.*]

MARY. No. You must work. You started the day by saying you would work. You have not worked. You had better.

CLAR. I want the air—dew and all that.

MARY. [*Quietly; pointing to the table*] Work.

[*She goes to the writing-table near the windows, takes a manuscript out of the case and arranges it on the table.*]

CLAR. [*Frivolously to* MADAME] Madame, lead me to this doctor.

MARY. [*Swiftly going to* MADAME *who is standing stock still observing her inmates as one observes the habits of apes*] Thank you, Madame. May I call you again if I want to ask questions?

MAD. Certainement.

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[*She goes slowly, looking back curiously as if she still had much to see.*]

MARY. [*Seeing her to the door*] Thank you.

[*Exit Madame.*]

MARY. Now then. What's the matter?

CLAR. Matter! Good heavens, the Empress of Muscovy!

MARY. The foreign woman?

CLAR. Why notski?

MARY. [*Going to the window and looking up and down the terrace*] Not a trace of her.

CLAR. If I look she'll be there.

MARY. See for yourself.

[CLARENCE, *with great precautions, goes and looks up and down. He comes back obviously disappointed.*]

MARY. Did you see her?

CLAR. No.

MARY. Then you feel better?

CLAR. No. — Let me go with you Mary, perhaps we'll—meet her.

MARY. [*Surveying* CLARENCE *quietly*] On the whole—I think you'd better stay here. Now come. I've laid out all the notes. We'll turn your back to the window so if she comes by you won't have to look.

[CLARENCE *goes to the table and sits down with great meekness.*]

CLAR. But Mary, supposing she does come while you're gone.

MARY. I shan't be long.

CLAR. She may be waiting to see you go out.

MARY. That is nonsense.

CLAR. It is not nonsense. It is human nature.

MARY. Clarence!

CLAR. Well?

MARY. [*Looking him in the eye*] Were there no

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CLAR. [*Looking* MARY *in the eye*] You mean—with extraordinary damsels—en route?

MARY. Yes.

CLAR. No.

MARY. Or any with ordinary damsels? At home?

CLAR. No. I told you all about those when we were married.

MARY. Yes. Then—my judgement is, it is better for you to stay here and work this morning.

CLAR. The risk is very great.

MARY. I want you to run the risk. I want you to harden yourself. I consider this a great opportunity. You can't always have me around to protect you, you know.

[CLARENCE *arranges his work humbly. He pauses and turns again to* MARY.]

CLAR. How do you suppose one addresses her?

MARY. Do not worry. She will address you.

CLAR. I know but—it would seem a pretty compliment to use her native tongue. Madame Muscovitch, I am gladovitch to meetski. Then how do I go on?

MARY. Never fear. She will go on.

CLAR. What shall I answer then? I know. I referovitch you to my wifeski.

MARY. [*Quickly*] No. I don't want you referring her to me! You must answer her for yourself!

CLAR. All right. Madame Muscovitch, Inowrunawayski!

MARY. Don't do any such thing. Face it through. Now do be careful of those notes. I feel you are not going to work very well. But I don't want all the labor of the last months destroyed while you are thinking of your Empress.

I don't see why you put me to this fearful test.

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CLAR. I know it. They do. That's the nuisance of it. But you know I claim that civilized man can safely indulge in this pastime.

MARY. O. You are civilized?

CLAR. [*Hastily*] And all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy.

MARY. No. You are never dull. You are many things you ought not to be, but you are never dull.

CLAR. Why Mary! That's positively sentimental!

MARY. I am stating a fact. Perhaps if you were dull, I might recommend these adventures as a pastime. To tell the truth, the women always end by making you fearfully mad—

CLAR. O come—

MARY. Yes, they do. I have kept notes on the subject.

CLAR. Horrors. [*He springs from his chair.*]

MARY. Never fear, they are in short-hand.

CLAR. But my seriousness as a scientific man—most good scientists read short-hand.

MARY. Their secretaries do. [CLARENCE *redoubles his efforts.*] Yours does, you know. You can't. And you might destroy something of real value. [CLARENCE *gives it up.*] You see, Clarence, hitherto I have always stood between you and these—er—*seismic disturbances.* But they are *recurrent.* I think you had better see one through alone. Then you'll be immune.

CLAR. O no. I don't feel strong enough. Besides, it won't be half the fun.

MARY. Fun!

CLAR. Yes. The whole point is, I want to feel I can make a quick slick getaway.

MARY. That's the trouble! You don't want to get caught. I think for once you ought to get caught—

CLAR. Well, I don't! And I greatly question your morality in giving me any such advice! That comes of your living over here so long among these Europeans and their wretched lack of standards. Now, in America we have standards. We *can* live up to them—if we want to!

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MARY. Then live up to them. Goodbye.

[*She goes out rapidly at the terrace and disappears through the gate.* CLARENCE *runs after her, watches her down the road, finally waves to her and then comes back slowly and rather ruefully. He sits at his desk and begins to write. Then he dreams as he turns over his notes. Then he gives two or three fearful glances over his shoulder. Then he really becomes absorbed. When he is thoroughly absorbed,* SONYA *is seen coming slowly along the terrace. She pauses at the window and looks at* CLARENCE'S *absorbed back with interest. She waits, hoping he will turn. He does not. Her attitudes and poses, as she waits, are various, attractive and unconscious. But finally, growing weary of crouching for her prey, with the tread of a panther in those sandals, she slowly pushes in through the window. The audience has a sensation that she is going to spring on* CLARENCE'*s back. She does not. She merely stands close enough to him to let her shadow fall on his page.* CLARENCE *turns with several inarticulate exclamations. He is genuinely startled. He jumps up.*]

SONYA. O pardon. I disturb you. May I ask what it is you do? [*Her tone is very mellow and pleasant.*]

CLAR. [*Conventionally*] Er. Ah. O. I was writing.

SON. [*With a slow and rather sly smile*] But what? I watch you write, out dere. You do not move. You arre all—buried in your work. You forget yourself. [*Exclaiming*] You arre a grreat arrtist!

CLAR. I? O no. No. I'm nothing but a scientific man.

SON. But—dey arre our grreatest men. Dey remake de worrld for us. O I grreatly reverence de scientific man. All de morre dat I am myself very ignorant.

CLAR. Hm.

[*She assumes an air of great humility. He regards her grimly. She moves toward him a step.*]

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SON. [*Suavely*] What science do you study?

CLAR. Archaeology. I've been engaged on a special branch.

SON. [*Really not interested; fingering his notes absently; even tumbling them about*] Ah. Dat is very fine.

[CLARENCE'S *fingers twitch with anxiety when she touches the papers and shifts them about.*]

SON. [*Looking up with a flashing glance*] I feel you are a great man.

CLAR. [*Deprecating*] O no. Not—so you'd notice it.

[*Here she seizes him warmly by the hand and shakes it. Then she leaves her hand in his. He does not know what to do with it. She drops his hand and tries another tack. She seats herself gracefully on a sofa down stage, and stretches out her feet.*]

SON. [*Yawning*] O. I am tired.

CLAR. [*Who has not yet recovered*] You—you have been walking?

SON. Yes. I do so every day. My 'usband. He will nevaire go wit me. I must go alone. Ees eet not sad?

CLAR. T-terribly.

SON. [*Pleased*] You tink so? And you? You are alone too. You work here in de dark house, when all outdoors is so beautiful.

CLAR. Yes. To—to be sure.

SON. O—verry sad. To see a young man like you shut away from de sunshine.

CLAR. Yes. [*As if thinking what to say next.*] I think it's sad too. Sad as—anything!

SON. [*Encouraged*] Ah, I must take you up over dese mountains. Togedder we will climb dose great peaks.

[*She jumps up, seizes him by the arm and drags him to the window.*]

SON. See dere! Far up! In de pure air!

CLAR. [*Abruptly, drawing himself away*] No! I can't say I care about it! [*He turns abruptly away.*]

SON. [*Taken aback and angry*] Mon Dieu!

CLAR. [*By way of apology*] You see my wife told me—

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SON. Your wife!

CLAR. I have a wife. Yes. What harm is there in that?

SON. I do not want your wife.

CLAR. Well see here. You have a husband. How about that?

SON. He does not count. [*Laughing a little.*] O he is good. I love him. [*She blows a kiss.*] O he is much more older dan me. He is over fifty. An invalid. You say not much of a companion for a woman like me. Hein? Strong and active and young.

CLAR. Well, I didn't say that and I wasn't going to. However, you are certainly strong, and I should judge active, and young—probably!

SON. Probably! [*She looks furious; then reconsiders and laughs.*] My friend, do you always pay court to ladies by walking about de room and turning your back on dem?

CLAR. [*Squaring about*] No.

SON. Den why wit me?

CLAR. It gives me a curious sensation to see you in that bathrobe, that's all.

SON. Civilized people believe in de beauty of de human body and de simple garment.

CLAR. Well, I guess I'm not civilized and these artistic things give me the Willies.

SON. What is dat?

CLAR. [*Leniently*] Breeze in my garret. Same thing.

SON. O I do not understand!

CLAR. No, you certainly do not. The point of the whole thing is you're up against a proposition you never struck before—a savage from North America.

SON. [*Flinging herself back on her sofa with an exclamation*] O, you arre a savage! But a parrt of me is a savage too! Would you believe it? [*With her swarthy*

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CLAR. [*Holding onto his forehead*] You don't say! Civilized! Ye gods, that's good!

SON. [*Pouting*] You do not like a child of nature. I remember. Dey always say de first ting de savage asks of de white man is de choker and de tall hat! Ha, ha! It takes de civilization of a tousand years to have a real love of beauty! [*She stands up.*]

CLAR. Going? So sorry.

SON. [*Furious.*] Going! Not at all! Look at me! I am beautiful. I am complete. You have never seen anyone like me before. When I am gone, you will remember, and it will be torment. [*She speaks gently with a malicious smile.*] I shall teach you to love beauty. I shall teach you to forget your stupid conventions. I shall teach you real freedom. You Americans arre all alike. You arre afraid of life.

CLAR. [*Imploring*] Don't—don't go on. Please—I beg—

SON. O yes, my dear friend. It is I who will teach you—

CLAR. My good woman, you can teach me nothing. It is in all the novels. Those dirty little girls in the Orient never read any of those things. They do it a great deal better. Be-lieve me!

SON. [*Giving way to her temper at last*] Ah! You are a cub. I will have noting morre to do wit you.

CLAR. That's right! I think it's the very best thing you can possibly do.

SON. [*Turning on him*] It is your wife! You arre afraid of your wife! I am not afraid of her!

CLAR. That is very nice, for my wife is not in the least afraid of you. Stay and see her—

SON. I?! [CLARENCE *starts slightly at her violence.*] I stay and see a *wife!* Fool! [*She laughs suddenly in a perfectly natural way.*] And I am going to stay and see your wife. She piques my curiosity. She must be like you,—new, piquant. [*She sits again.*] Will you not give me a

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cigarette, my friend? I have been suffering for one dis long time.

CLAR. [*With alacrity*] Certainly.

[*He takes out cigarettes and matches and hands them to her.*]

CLAR. May I?

[*She nods and he turns aside to light his cigarette. She looks distinctly peevish for a moment, then lights hers.*]

SON. [*Mellow*] Now tell me about yourself.

[*Suddenly,* SONYA *is the woman of the world and her bizarrerie seems to fall away. She even looks well dressed.*]

SON. And you have been working down dere in de Orient? How?

CLAR. [*A little at a loss at the sudden change in the weather*] Why, we've been digging into the old ruins and sorting and arranging notes. Stupid, isn't it?

SON. Not at all. To me it is new. Tell me—

CLAR. Why it's hard work. That's all. But I will say we made quite a little dent into the past.

SON. Yes? We? Your wife? She worked wit you?

CLAR. [*Nodding*] Yes. And I believe she's better at it than I!

SON. O. [*She looks thoughtful.*] Perhaps dat is why—

CLAR. Well?

SON. Dat is why you feel so bound to her, no doubt.

CLAR. No. I wouldn't call it that. We leave each other singularly free. How can I tell, while I'm here with you, she may be running off with another man,—your husband perhaps. But I'm perfectly calm.

[SON [illegible] willingly]

CLAR. [illegible]

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SON. But you talk of her so much. She must be a wonder, dis wife!

CLAR. She is mighty good at archaeology.

[SONYA *throws her cigarette on the floor with a discontented expression.*]

CLAR. O, you don't like it?

SON. No. Dey arre not good.

[CLARENCE *stoops and picks up the cigarette.*]

SON. Why do you do dat? It can stay.

CLAR. But it was setting the mat on fire.

SON. Never mind. I tink your wife is different from any woman on eart'. Or—[*with a really friendly and charming smile*]—you are really loyal. Why you are interesting people.

CLAR. Thank you.

[*He approaches* SONYA *entirely off his guard and offers her another box of cigarettes.* MARY *enters the garden and comes up on the terrace. They do not see her.*]

CLAR. These are more your sort.

SON. Ah yes. [*She puts one to her lips.*] Here! [*She draws* CLARENCE *down to her and lights her cigarette at his.*] Voilà. Merci. Yes. Dis is better.—But it is so wonderful to see such loyalty in a man. It is so rare.

[CLARENCE *much more susceptible to this gentle treatment than to the lady's former onslaughts, stays where he is and leans on the arm of her sofa. She smiles, looks up at him and takes his hand.*]

SON. [*With real kindness*] My friend, I tink we arre going to have an interesting time. It is not often a man like you comes my way. And you live and work wit one who is in sympathy. Dat is de best of life. I envy you.

[MARY *comes in and slowly down beside them.*]

MARY. [*Quietly*] There. You see, Clarence, you're really doing very well without me after all.

[CLARENCE *springs to the right-about.* SONYA *rises not at all dismayed.*]

[CURTAIN]

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ACT II.

Scene: The salon of the Price's apartment at Madame Monterini's. Doors left and up right. Two long windows leading out onto a balcony right center and left center. A huge mirror between the windows. A grand piano up stage, across the left window. A chaise longue down left. It is piled high with Oriental and rather soiled pillows. There are small tables up center and at right. The room is as untidy as cigarette stumps, faded flowers, newspapers and magazines, cosmetic boxes, plates with sweetmeats and unnecessary knick-knacks can make it.

It is afternoon a few days later. The sun shines through the two windows which command a view of the mountains. As the curtain rises, some one is heard playing modern Russian music. The player, who is SONYA, *dressed elegantly if a little carelessly in a Paris confection, plays extremely well and continues a moment after the curtain is up. Suddenly she breaks down.*

SON. Ah bah! No.

[*She glances across the room as if to see the effect on someone who is sitting in an arm-chair with its back to the audience. This is* SIR GILBERT, *reading a newspaper. There are many others piled neatly beside his chair. He puts down his paper when the music breaks off.*]

SIR G. Well, my dear. What is the matter?

SON. O nothing. Read your paper.

[*Her tone to her husband is brusque, but not unkind. He reads on, while she continues to play. Then she breaks down on purpose and bangs the keys childishly.*]

SON. [*Banging*] Ah—brr. Mrr. Mn!

[*She rises with an air of triumph.*]

SIR G. Well. Is it dead?

SON. [*Wandering to the window; fingering her untidy hair*] What?

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SIR G. The piano.

SON. I did not break it.

SIR G. I thought you hoped you had.

SON. [*With guile*] Do you not like to hear me practice?

SIR G. With your fingers, yes. With your fists, no.

[SONYA *immediately goes to the piano and bangs on the keys.*]

SIR G. [*Rising*] A suggestion on your part that I should leave you, my dear. I am going. It is time I went to the café. I shall get the latest news there. [*He goes for his hat.*]

SON. [*Eagerly; giving him his hat*] Yes. Go and get de latest news.

SIR G. [*Smiling; shaking his head at* SONYA] A little too obvious, the method, my dear. [*He goes toward the door; turns back.*] What did you say you were going to do with yourself this afternoon?

SON. I did not say. What difference can it make to you?

SIR G. [*At the door*] Because I have asked the little lady who sits opposite to us at table,—Mrs. Buell,—to take tea with us. She is very nice.

SON. [*Pouting*] You ask her witout consulting me? Disgusting!

SIR G. Yes. The room is. Please tidy up before I come back. I set the time at four o'clock. I shall hurry home. I am very anxious to talk to the little woman.

SON. *Why* are you so anxious to talk to her?

SIR G. Because she is so unlike you. I asked her to bring her husband to amuse you. [SONYA'S *frown behind her hand changes to a naughty smile.*] I'm not interested in him myself. Please keep him entertained and leave her to me.

[*She runs to him and gives his ears a box.*]

SIR G. My dear, do be careful.

SON. O chéri! Did I hurt you? Let me kiss you!

[*She throws her arms about his neck.*]

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SIR G. There, there. Not quite so violent. You know, my dear, your scorn and your pity express themselves so very similarly. I wish you would break yourself of this violence. I have been lecturing you so many years about it. There now. Let me kiss you properly.

[*He kisses her properly. She teases him by continuing to kiss him.*]

SIR G. [*Quite desperate*] My dear, if you would only become domesticated.

[*He puts her away and puts himself to rights.*]

SIR G. Now have the samovar going at four—*promptly*. And do your hair.

[*He goes out up right. She stretches herself and laughs. Then she calls off left.*]

SON. Marie! Come here!

[*A typical London maid,—very wooden,—appears at door left.*]

MAR. [*Stiffly*] Were you addressing me, Madam?

SON. Certainly.

MAR. Me nyme's Mosher, Madam. I prefer to be called it.

SON. I prefer to call you by your first name. And also to be addressed as Lady Price.

MAR. Beg parding, Madam. Furriners is always called Madam.

SON. Hurry! Tidy me, will you? Hurry!

MAR. [*Stiffly*] Madam?

[SONYA *seats herself before the mirror and begins to powder herself heavily.* MARIE *disappears and reappears with comb and brush.*]

SON. [*Calling over her shoulder*] Make me tidy, do you hear? Make me beautiful!

MARIE. [*Going to* SONYA *with great deliberation*] It ayn't possible to myke yer tidy, Madam. I've told yer that

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SON. [*Inclined to be amused at first*] Tell me, what must one be to be beautiful, in *your* opinion?

MAR. It ayn't my opinion, Madam. It's wot *is* beautiful. To be raly beautiful, one 'as ter be a rale lidy first.

[*She has pushed in a final hair-pin and goes to pick up the room.* SONYA *nurses her rage for a moment, then she throws comb and brush at* MARIE. MARIE *catches them and puts them down with the agility born of long practise and continues about her work. A faint and timid knock is now heard at the door up right. Neither of the women pays attention.*]

SON. Beast! [*Then she addresses* MARIE *volubly in Russian.*]

MARIE. Go on! Wen yer talk like that I dunno wot yer sy. It's true wot I tell yer all the sime.

SON. [*Laughing in spite of herself*] Then why do you stay?

MAR. I'm o'ny styin' on till Lidy Beecham gets back outer Germany. Now with this war an' all she may not be back. But I'll wite a wile. I'll accomodite yer.

[SONYA *suddenly flings her chair at* MARIE. MARIE *catches it even more deftly than the comb and brush. At that instant the door opens and* CLARENCE *is seen standing outside, frozen with astonishment.*]

MAR. [*Patiently*] It do beat all the wy yer toss things abart. [*She sees* CLARENCE; *without changing her voice*] The gentleman's 'ere, Madam.

[SONYA'S *face instantly assumes a charming smile.*]

SON. [*Mellow*] O come in. Come in.

[*She goes to him graciously and draws him into the room by the hand.* MARIE *throws the pillows to rights on the lounge, picks up a paper or two and some faded roses and goes out left.*]

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CLAR. O dear no. Nothing like it. Accidental acquaintances. Perhaps accidental—enemies?

SON. O de chair was for my maid. She angers me.

CLAR. You don't say. I thought you were greatly pleased.

[*He wanders about the room uncomfortably.*]

SON. Now dere you go wandering again. Cannot you be happy wit me a moment?

CLAR. I might be a moment, yes. But not a whole hour, —which was the time set, I believe?

[SONYA *pouts.*]

CLAR. O what's the matter now! Don't throw a chair. [*He takes one up and holds it before him as a guard.*] You ought to have prepared me for this particular trait in your character. For this facet in the diamond.

SON. How can I? I never know how I'm going to be. Ees not dat de charrm?

[*She arranges herself becomingly on the sofa.*]

SON. [*Holding a pillow out to* CLARENCE; *very childish*] Put it behind my head. So. Tanks. Yes. Now sit beside me.

[*She draws a chair slowly to the side of the couch.*]

SON. [*Seductively*] Come? Hn?

[*She begins on cigarettes at once. She lights her own, and offers one to him. As he comes forward to take it, she pulls him down into the chair and lights his cigarette for him at her own.*]

CLAR. [*Ruffled*] O come now, you know. This is so sudden.

SON. I? Am I ever anyting else?

CLAR. No. You are not.

[*He tries to look at his ease.*]

CLAR. [*Conversing*] So the gentleman we met at lunch is your husband?

SON. Don't talk of my husband. Will you never learn?

CLAR. I must say just one thing about him. I suppose you were—*sudden*—too about marrying him, weren't you?

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CLAR. [*Reflectively*] Yes. I suppose that is what my wife is thinking about me.

SON. Your wife! [*She sits up.*] Young man, you have a wife. I know it. You have shown her to me. And you have talked, talked, talked about her. But while you are here wit me, we do not mention her. No. You are here for someting else dan to talk about your wife.

CLAR. I wish you'd tell me what I am here for. It's what I've been asking myself. My wife won't tell me.

[SONYA *shrieks.* CLARENCE *rises quickly and holds up his chair for protection.*]

SON. Put down your chair. Sit down. Learn de world. When you call on a married woman and are yourself a married man, husbands and wives are not important. You did not tell your wife you were coming here?

CLAR. I wanted to, but she wouldn't let me.

SON. You see. She knows de world. Shame. And you a great scholar. You look like a man of de world. I believe you have more experience dan you will admit.

CLAR. [*Turning to her with a comical expression*] How you read me.

SON. I knew dat. When I saw dose spectacles on your wife—ah. [*She buries her face in the pillows and laughs.*] It is de men wit de spectacled wives dat have de experience.

[CLARENCE, *really angry, jumps up and strides across the room like lightning.*]

SON. Where are you going?

CLAR. I thought you were not to talk about my wife!

SON. You may not talk about her. But I may. It makes you so angry. And I love to see you angry. No, you are not cold. Coldness is wit you a pose.

[*He regards her sourly from across the room.*]

SON. Ah, what ees de matter, my friend? Do you not like me?

CLAR. Not yet.

SON. Ah but you will!

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CLAR. On whether you're different. So far, you're very much the same.

SON. [*Frowns, but speaks quite calmly*] I tink you will find me different. How can you tell? I have so many moods. And I like you so much. You will like me.

CLAR. I shan't if I don't want to. That's my way.

SON. Dey always like me.

CLAR. Tell me. Do you make a specialty of making *them* like you?

SON. Yes. It is a spécialité. I do as you do in your work.

CLAR. No, you don't. There's no play about work. I come all kinds of croppers in mine. Never sure from minute to minute whether I'm coming out on top or not.

SON. Dat is it! Dat makes de excitement of de chase!

CLAR. O. Hunting. That's your line, is it? Well allow me to say your form is bad.

SON. [*Breaking in angrily*] Mine!

CLAR. It's so obvious!

[SONYA *is not sure whether to rage or to cry.*]

CLAR. Any near-sighted game could see you wig-wagging miles away. All this clatter would warn a deaf rabbit. Really you know, it's awfully startling and disintegrating to see anyone going about the way you were yesterday morning. But it's—all overdone. You ought not to have come in and talked. You ought to have made me wonder. I did. I really did. Until you came in.

SON. Ha! You are not subtle. You do not know de art of love. All its high contrast. Its fine shading. Its delicacy in tings unsaid. Anoder man wit a quick warm temperament, he would have been moved by de unusual, de bizarre. But you Americans have not quick warm temperaments. I should have remembered.

CLAR. True. We're all from Missouri.

SON. Where is dat?

CLAR. It's a place where they

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But Lord! It isn't subtle! If that's subtlety, give me a broncho and a lariat.

SON. [*With a sudden change to genuine frankness*] Well. I cannot help what I am. I come from a wild passionate race, and wheder I am subtle or not, I do not know. I do not care. I grew up,—you know how dat is in Volhynia? Miles and miles from a city on a great estate. Great house, yes. But de roof leaked and it was never mended. Many servants, many,—much vodka. Fine clothes, dirty. You do not tink from what I tell you I had station? My fader was a great nobleman. And I entered de best society in Vienna. And den dey flatter me. "You are so subtle. O you Slavs are so subtle." So I play I am subtle. What did I care? It was de game of love I loved. No. I am not subtle. I do not care.

CLAR. It's a great deal better to admit it. And it was too bad anyone ever put it into your head. I think you'd have been a first rate girl if you'd had a chance!

SON. I! What do *you* mean by chance!

CLAR. What are the Court circles of a European town—

SON. I know dem all, princes and diplomats. And dey have loved me. What can you in America know about dat?

CLAR. Everything. It's all in the Sunday papers.

SON. Young man, I am on footing wit Emperors—

CLAR. That's nothing. We can have the plumber to dinner if we like.

SON. My love has inspired music. Artists have painted me. Yes. Great scholars,—I have had dem at my feet.

CLAR. Can you pass the examinations they set? My wife can! Can you take a Ford car apart and put it together again? My wife can!

SON. [*With a contemptuous exclamation*] I make an art of life and love. I live wit people, not tings, tings, *tings!*

CLAR. You've missed it. You never went into the woods a hundred miles from anywhere, and lived in the rain for a month, tramping, hunting your food, cooking it, doing all your own chores, and *sleeping* at the end of the day the way one sleeps in heaven!

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SON. What do you call dat?

CLAR. Vacation! Glorious! And you've missed it all. You couldn't do that, could you? My wife can. Well, I'd better mosey along home—

SON. [*Looking dangerous*] Wait. [*He waits.*] Come here. [CLARENCE *approaches her most reluctantly.*] *Your wife* is coming here at four.

CLAR. [*Looking as pleased as possible*] Well, well.

SON. You are pleased. My husband asked her. She is coming to see him. And he wants me to entertain you so dat he can devote himself to your wife.

CLAR. Say—this is interesting.

SON. [*Teasing*] What if your wife comes in and finds you alone wit me?

CLAR. Doesn't bother me at all. She knows my habits. But how about your husband?

SON. You are afraid he will shoot you if he finds you here?

CLAR. What does he usually do under the circumstances? I'm not used to diplomatic life.

SON. I will hide you.

CLAR. I'd look nice,—wouldn't I?—squeezed into your wardrobe.

SON. Den I will tell a little story.

CLAR. I suppose you think he would believe you.

SON. Of course.

CLAR. [*Grinning*] I don't believe it.

SON. It is true. I keep him ignorant. He does not know how much I like de society of men.

CLAR. What good does diplomatic life do him if he doesn't?

SON. Bah. You are cynical.

CLAR. No. Only a trifle bored.

[*He suppresses a yawn behind his hand.*]

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[*He pretends to yawn again. She sits up looking uncommonly wild.*]

CLAR. Now don't. You know that panther pose of yours frightens me. It doesn't charm me.

SON. It is not a pose. I mean it.

[CLARENCE *rises very quietly and tries to steal away.*]

SON. [*Seizing him by the arm*] You shall not go. I shall understand you yet.

CLAR. Better not. I'm really not interesting. One gets to the end of me very quickly.

SON. [*With a cry*] I will make you want to stay!

CLAR. My dear woman, you don't know how. You can't!

SON. It is not natural. Dere is someting behind it. It is absolutely unheard of—

[*She is on the verge of tears.*]

CLAR. O good God, don't cry about it. I'm not myself. Not in my best form,—

SON. But why—why—

CLAR. You won't let me tell you why. It is a subject you told me never to mention. Isn't done in diplomatic circles and all that sort of thing! So I never never can explain!

SON. [*Holding onto his arm*] Your WIFE is back of all dis. I feel it. She torments you. She is *jalouse!*

[*The door opens and* SIR GILBERT *admits* MARY *and follows immediately himself.* CLARENCE *moves toward* MARY *at once.* MARY *is simply clad in an afternoon gown which accords with her blonde hair. She wears a Panama hat of the best quality, the sort that will squeeze into a suit-case and can be worn in the rain and yet never lose its shape.*]

MARY. [*Passing her husband*] Getting on famously. Don't need me at all.

CLAR. [*Piteously*] Don't I just!—

MARY. Hush.

[*She goes to* SONYA *and shakes hands.* SIR GILBERT *greets* CLARENCE.]

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SIR G. [*To his wife*] Well, my dear. Where's the samovar? Where's everything? Mrs. Buell has been walking. And I've promised her some Russian tea.

SON. [*Sulkily*] You may ring.

[*He does so without being asked.*]

SIR G. [*Passing close to* SONYA] My dear, our guests.

[SONYA *grunts, but does not rise. Enter* MARIE *at left with the samovar. She sets it down on the table the wrong way round.*]

SON. [*Shouting*] Wrong again! Not dat way!

[*She rises swiftly and turns it about.* MARIE *regards her coldly.*]

MAR. Beg parding, but I never could get the 'ang of the thing. Nothin' I'm uster.

[*She brings cake in a disdainful manner, then goes out at left, shutting the door.* SONYA *pours tea in the customary glasses, deftly, gracefully, and dispenses it like a woman of the world. Then, taking* MARY'S *arm she goes back to the couch and makes* MARY *sit beside her.* SIR GILBERT *passes them cake.* SONYA *nibbles her cake, half reclining and regarding* MARY *sideways.* MARY *looks at* SONYA. *The men look at* MARY, *subsiding helplessly at the other side of the room.*]

MARY. Wouldn't you be more comfortable if you sat up to eat your cake?

[*She tries to make* SONYA *comfortable by arranging the pillows.*]

SON. O no. I am Oriental. I love to recline.

MARY. But don't the crumbs get under your elbow?

SON. Crumbs? What matter if dey do?—Tell me, do you never give way?

MARY. To what?

SON. Passion. Or anger. Or luxury.

MARY. No. They're too uncomfortable.

SIR G. My dear, I don't think Mrs. Buell is comfortable in that chair.

SON. You are comfortable?

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MARY. Anywhere.

CLAR. She makes a point of that.

SIR G. She has a remarkably trained mind.

CLAR. I trained it.

SIR G. It seems to me clearly original.

SON. [*Querulously*] Why do you talk so much about her?

SIR G. Because we cannot talk to her.

SON. But you can look at her. [*She looks at* MARY *and begins to laugh.*] You know I really must laugh when I look at dose spectacles. Dey are so very ugly.

SIR G. Now, my dear—

CLAR. O Mary doesn't mind.

MARY. It is awfully hard to talk to footnotes, Clarence.

SIR G. She is quite right. I will show you my collection of coins. Kept expressly for occasions like these.

[*He rises and gets them out. The men studiously entertain themselves.*]

SON. Tell me, how do you ever expect to hold a man wit dose goggles?

MARY. Hold a man with these goggles? I never tried.

SON. O dat is not true. You are a great coquette.

MARY. Yes. That is why I wear them—to protect mankind.

SON. [*Seriously*] Den you miss de one ting in life wort' having.

MARY. Ah, but holding a man implies, I suppose, that he is trying to get away!

SON. Dat makes de great sport. He does not want to, but against his will he is held.

[MARY *slowly shakes her head.*]

SON. You do not deserve your charming husband, my dear. He is all a husband should be. He is loyal.

MARY. Not acutely. Chronically.

SON. Den he is sometimes forgetful of you?

MARY. Never wholly. That is what I complain of. He is too dependent. I appeal to you. Wouldn't you think he would want to manage his flirtations himself?

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SON. [*Her face depicting horror*] He—you manage his affairs for him?

MARY. No. But he would like to have me. Now I think he should stand on his own feet. Don't you think so?

SON. [*Sitting up in genuine bewilderment*] But—is dat done in your country?

MARY. Not always. There are very few men so absurdly dependent as my husband. You know I get very tired. I should feel it a great kindness if you would take him completely off my hands.

SON. [*Terribly excited*] You really want him off your hands?

MARY. O we all need vacations now and again, don't we?

SON. I never heard of anyting like dis before! [*More circumspectly*] He seems very fond of me. I am not very eager for men's society. But he has sought me out. I cannot get rid of him.

MARY. O don't let him make himself a bother!

SON. It is hard when one is compassionate. I wish I had your temperament. Adamant! No heart!

MARY. O yes. But I keep it perfectly regulated. I regulate it every morning when I get up.

SON. No! I do not believe dat! But since you are so cold, I tink it will be a very good ting to be kind to your husband. I have de idea he too needs a vacation. Do you regulate *his* heart, every morning?

MARY. No. I leave that to him. But I really think I ought. You see it runs behind or too fast so much of the time. One can never depend on it. Now you have nothing particular to do?

SON. Why do you ask?

MARY. For if it is so, I wish you would undertake to regulate my husband's heart.

SIR G. [*Calling*] My dear, I feel sure Mrs. Buell has run through your favorite topic by this time. This is a Roman coin, Mrs. Buell. Very old.

MARY. [*To* SONYA; *rising*] I'll send my husband to you.

[*She crosses to the other side of the room. Her*

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husband gives up his chair to her, but lingers behind it.]

SON. [*Calling to him*] Come here! Come here!

CLAR. [*Turning to* SON.] Now keep perfectly still. We don't want you to move. Everything is very nice as it is.

SON. [*Laughing*] Come here! Your wife sends you.

CLAR. [*To* MARY] Is that true?

[MARY *nods.* CLARENCE *goes reluctantly to the foot of the couch.*]

CLAR. You like my wife, don't you? You get on with her.

SON. [*Comfortably*] O not at all. But I let her tink so. It makes her so happy. But I have someting to say to you. I do not wish to shout.

CLAR. I told you I do not want to come here.

[SONYA *kneels up on the foot of the couch with her face close to his.*]

SON. [*Rapidly*] Your wife wishes me to take you on a vacation.

CLAR. [*Staring*] My wife!

SON. She said so.

CLAR. I don't believe it!

[*He tries to turn to* MARY.]

SON. [*Holding him fast*] She is tired of you. She said so. I never heard anyting so barefaced. She wants—[*she laughs*]—dat you and I should take a holiday togeder. Paris!

CLAR. Shades of Uncle Ezra! Not Paris! Anywhere else! Not Paris!

SON. Why not? Well. We will go anywhere else!

[CLARENCE *breaks away and goes out on the balcony.* SONYA *rises swiftly and follows. The other two keep their heads studiously bent over the coins.*]

SIR G. That is a Winged Victory. Very neatly done. The poise is light and firm. Well-balanced. Like you.

MARY. [*Smiling*] Thank you. That is a compliment I like.

SIR G. I will say more. I think you are far better worth

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study than any of these coins. It is a pleasure to see some one who knows her place in the scheme of things, at a time when the endeavor of mankind is proving itself so futile.

MARY. O I cannot believe it is futile, Sir Gilbert!

SIR G. Take me as an example. My life has been spent in what is known as the world of diplomacy. Playing little games, with some few well-worn kings and queens as the pawns. My life has been spent that way. And I thought its objects of vital importance. It seems now the stakes were countless human lives more useful than mine. And my occupation, such as it was, has been taken away. And of what use am I? I cannot, as you say, even fold my own coat successfully.

MARY. [*Quickly*] That reminds me.

[*She takes from her bag several pairs of socks neatly folded.*]

SIR G. My word! I shall not wear these. I shall treasure them.

MARY. [*Protesting*] O please don't! They are for use.

SIR G. Symbols. Of an order we men have never attained. I feel I have much to learn from you about mankind.

MARY. You have come to the wrong person. I am not a siren! [*She smiles.*]

SIR G. Exactly so. I was speaking of women. And women are an ancient institution. We men are very recent inventions. Now this is where you can help me. Why do *we* never learn from *you!*

MARY. Because the world is so full of nagging wives!

SIR G. You do not nag.

MARY. O no. I learned I mustn't.

SIR G. Our greatest saints are those who have voluntarily renounced the world's pleasures. But I fear your husband felt himself neglected.

MARY. O no. I hope not.

SIR G. I am *sure* not. The best food at regular hours—

MARY. [*Softly*] It is ready, but he won't come—

SIR G. These always in order. [*He holds up the socks.*]

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And you learned stenography. I'm sure you learned stenography?

[MARY *nods.*]

SIR G. Ah. All modern wives should have the pen of a ready typewriter. And a great capacity for listening. You have the greatest genius for listening! Happy man[[*He glances over his shoulder at the balcony door.*] All he has to do is work—and talk. All else is provided. But it is not a good plan.

MARY. O? [*She seems surprised and a little amused.*]

SIR G. It is not a good plan to be all things to one man. He becomes too dependent.

MARY. O Clarence is not dependent. [*She interrupts herself as if suddenly wondering, then proceeds*] I want him to feel he can always do without me.

SIR G. Very artful. He now believes he never can. Otherwise, you could not so peacefully abandon him to the winds of chance,—as now you do!

[*There is a slight expression of doubt on Mary's face, but she conceals it from* SIR GILBERT.]

SIR G. As a former diplomat, I am interested in your method.

MARY. [*Quickly*] O there was never any method. Except—we were always very frank. I explain women to him, you know, so he can never be fooled.

SIR G. But I supposed in matters of this kind it was the fooling process that was the great enjoyment.

MARY. [*Nodding wisely*] He knows the after effects.

SIR G. After effects deter none of us! And yet I feel you are strangely confident. May I tell you something? [MARY *nods.*] You never explain to him. You listen benignly while he explains himself. He has—we'll say—a scarcely perceptible penchant for flirtation. And so he talks to you about the needs of "nature." And "human nature." And "his nature."

MARY. [*Surprised; naive*] He does! How did you know?

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SIR G. How?—One day perhaps he quite unconsciously explains to you that the whole history of mankind, which he is digging out of these shop-worn deserts, is simply *putting nature in her place.* "Nature!" Where has he heard that word? He talks no more.

MARY. [*Laughing*] How did you guess?

SIR G. That is my secret. But now he knows that the pastime of flirtation is flat, stale and unprofitable. He has convinced himself. And this you brought about. Masterly! You have the makings of a great diplomat. I would say, it is we diplomats who have learned from the nobler calling. [*He bows.*] Let me thank you for restoring my faith that the study of mankind is of permanent use. [*He regards* MARY *with his quizzical smile.*] So you have arrived at a point in his training—

MARY. [*Quickly*] But you just said he had trained himself!

SIR G. I should say, you have arrived at a point in training him to train himself, where you are sure his enjoyments are now entirely intelligent and farsighted?

MARY. He has not completed his own training, I admit.

SIR G. [*After regarding* MARY *a moment*] After all, the wonder is not how you trained him, but how you trained yourself. You are very staunch. You are very hopeful. You are tremendously sincere. But I think you must get excessively tired. You must sometimes need a vacation, and I am going to give you one.

MARY. [*Brightly*] Thank you.

SIR G. You take it in the right spirit. We understand one another.

MARY. Possibly.

SIR G. Why not?

MARY. [*As before*] All we need is to understand the situ-

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MARY. We like irregular action.

SIR G. Not all the time?

MARY. Not all the time. On the whole.

SIR G. On the whole.

[CLARENCE *who has been looking in at the two, here breaks away from* SONYA *and comes in.*]

CLAR. Mary!

MARY. [*To* SIR G.] I think we ought to go out on the balcony.

SIR G. As you please. I will point out the caves along the lake where there are inscriptions. I will take you there myself,—on our vacation.

[*They go out.* CLARENCE *stands looking after them half inclined to follow.* SONYA *comes up to him and puts her arm through his.*]

SON. To Paris. We can have such a good time.

CLAR. No! Not Paris!

SON. Say where.

CLAR. I *said* where. *Anywhere!*

SON. May I den choose?

CLAR. Yes. Route, tickets, luggage, everything!

SON. Ah, but you should help me.

[*She is very seductive. In fact, hanging on his arm, she goes through quite a range of expressions. It is all lost on* CLARENCE *who is looking out on the balcony.*]

CLAR. [*Suddenly*] Why should I go when I don't want to?

SON. Yes you do. You want to start tonight.

CLAR. I do want to start tonight. But I shall leave you behind.—I'll meet you on the way. How's that?

SON. You will not meet me. Men—all de same.

CLAR. Good heavens, have you had that happen to you? Deuced awkward, isn't it?

SON. [*Furious*] O!

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[*She walks away in one of her fits of despair. This always stimulates* CLARENCE.]

CLAR. I am curious to see how you'll get me to go.

SON. But I shall.

CLAR. Try it, little one, try it! Exhaust the little bag of tricks!

SON. I do not care. You will see. We will be in Paris togeder. Ha! Mon joyeux compagnon! Ha! [*She laughs.*]

CLAR. I'll bet anything you like, you don't manage it!

SON. Good! De one who loses pays de trip!

CLAR. I'll match you pennies. [*He claps his hand into his pocket.*] Heads I win, tails you lose, see?

SON. No, no. I shall win eider way. It is Paris. And the Boulevards. And the war and the excitement and—you! Mon ami, it will be better dan you tink!

[*She suddenly pats both his cheeks smartly.*]

CLAR. [*Exclaiming*] O too much! Too much! You've lost! You've spoiled it. Now you'll never pull it off.

[*He goes to the balcony door.*]

CLAR. Good-bye, Sir Gilbert.

[SIR GILBERT *and* MARY *come in.*]

CLAR. [*To Mary*] Get me out of this!

SIR G. You're not going?

MARY. [*Giving him her hand*] We must. We've had a delightful time.

SIR G. You won't forget. The caves. Tomorrow. You and I.

SON. [*Overhearing*] Wha-at? You go wit her?

SIR G. *You* are not going, my dear! Mrs. Buell will accompany me. I find I need a little vacation.

[SONYA *flings herself on the couch with an outburst of laughter.*]

SIR G. [*Going to her.*] My dear. Order. Comport yourself. Sit up. Our guests!

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CLAR. [*Under cover of* SONYA'S *exclamations; to* MARY] Take me to Uncle Ezra,—*now!*

MARY. Go alone. I have another engagement.

[CLARENCE *goes out abruptly.* MARY *meets* SIR GILBERT *and he accompanies her to the door, chatting.*]

[CURTAIN]

ACT III.

*Scene: A bedroom in a Parisian hotel. Small, not ornate, suggests being the cheapest and smallest and most lofty room in the house. A bed stands with its head against the left wall, its foot out into the middle of the room. There is a door up center. The occupants of the room,—*UNCLE EZRA, CLARENCE, MR. GRAVES, *an Englishman, and* M. CLÉMENT, *a Frenchman, are sitting more or less squeezed together in the space left by the bed, three on uncomfortable chairs, the fourth—*CLARENCE—*on the foot of the bed.*

UNCLE EZRA *is a clergyman, perhaps slightly rural, unmistakably American, and presents at this time a very dilapidated appearance. His face is haggard and unshorn, his linen soiled, also his hands, and his clerical clothes are greatly in need of a brushing. In fact, he is a wreck of his former self. His companions, the Englishman and the Frenchman, represent equal stages of exhaustion in their several ways. It is evident that the three in question have not slept for many nights, and have had little food and opportunity for washing. And yet, it must be repeated, they are all respectable men.* CLARENCE, *the only one who is not respectable, is not so dishevelled, but he certainly looks crushed and defeated.*

MR. GRAVES, *as the curtain rises, is evidently finishing a long tale to* CLARENCE *in a low voice. The Frenchman is sitting with a polite and glazed stare, trying not to wink, for if he winks he knows he will nod.* UNCLE EZRA *has frankly dropped off.*

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MR. G. —And last night he spent in a railway station, helping the crowds of refugees. Most devoted. But we found him finally, absolutely exhausted, hungry and penniless. His money—all he had—

M. CLÉM. [*Excitedly*] Given to ze people of France! He ees a saint!

CLARENCE. [*Grumpily*] All right. And what do you suggest?

MR. G. That you take him to Switzerland at once.

M. CLÉM. Oui. Oui. It is ze good idea.

CLAR. Not on any account.

MR. G. But my dear fellow, I thought you came down to find him.

CLAR. I must confess it was far more to lose myself!

MR. G. Ah. But to do that you are doubtless provided with funds.

CLAR. No. Forgot all about that.

[*He feels in his empty pockets.*]

MR. G. [*Greatly troubled*] It seems to me then you would have done better to stay where you were. Well, at least you can put your uncle up here for a day or two, till we can reach his people and funds.

[CLARENCE *looks disconsolately about the room and nods moodily.*]

MR. G. [*Looking at his watch*] We must be going back. But I say, might we order up some tea? I haven't seen food all day. Neither has Clément.

CLAR. By all means. Make yourselves at home.

M. CLÉM. [*To* MR. G., *shaking his head*] C'est dommage!

[*The two men go to the telephone.*]

MR. G. I say, will you order the tea, Clément? I've been talking French uninterruptedly for five days and nights and I'm run out.

CLÉM. Mais certainement.

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CLAR. Well, Uncle Ezra, we're two of a kind for once, aren't we?

UNC. E. [*With great dignity*] Clarence!

CLAR. It's the greatest rest to see you looking so tough.

UNC. E. Clarence!

M. CLÉM. [*At the telephone*] What ees thees! Monsieur!

MR. G. Buell. Someone wants to talk to you.

[CLARENCE *goes.*]

CLAR. What? Who? No. Can't see anyone. Gone to bed very ill. Something infectious.

[*He hangs up with an apprehensive face and groans.*]

UNC. E. Clarence. What was that you were saying? If you referred to yourself, it was an untruth.

CLAR. Better that than the fearful consequences of truth!

UNC. E. You are not in bed nor are you ill—

CLAR. I expect to be at any minute!

UNC. E. I think for your own credit you had best correct your statements.

CLAR. For the credit of everybody here, I shall not.

UNC. E. Clarence, I am very tired, so I think I will go back to Switzerland with you this afternoon.

CLAR. I repeat what I said. I have no money to go with or to take you.

UNC. E. It's the most singular—the most unkind thing I ever heard in my life.

CLAR. I agree with you.

UNC. E. We cannot both stay in this little room.

CLAR. O each of us can sleep every *other* night—provided the *other fellow* doesn't whistle and sing!

UNC. E. [*Turning his back*] If this should ever be known at home, Clarence. If this should ever be known in Georgetown Corners.

CLAR. No doubt you will see to it that it is, Uncle Ezra.

UNC. E. Why on earth will you not take me back to Switzerland?

CLAR. It's too dangerous.

UNC. E. Good Heavens! You left Mary in danger?

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CLAR. Mary is well protected. Very well protected. Too well protected. But she left me exposed to the gravest danger and in the most heartless manner.

[*Suddenly there is a knock at the door.*]

CLÉM. C'est le garçon!

[*He opens the door wide.* SONYA *stands on the threshold, carrying a tea-tray. She is dressed in a travelling costume, very chic, and she wears a touch of barbaric color. She is radiant. The gentlemen turn. A chair or two tips over.* M. CLÉMENT *gallantly takes the tea-tray.*]

MR. G. Bless my soul!

UNC. E. Really, Clarence! What is this?

CLAR. [*Still on the bed and shrunk into his collar*] This, Uncle Ezra, is the danger.

UNC. E. [*In desperation; as nobody says anything*] Um. Somebody's got to say something. Say she is a relation.

CLAR. Which one would you select?

UNC. E. Say it is Mary!

CLAR. [*Waking up; greatly entertained*] Well, well, Uncle Ezra. This is good of you. Too good to be true!

UNC. E. To protect my reputation. What would become of me if this were known in Georgetown Corners. [*He goes toward* SONYA *with determination*] Mary! Come in! You are very welcome! Gentlemen,—Mr. Graves, M. Clément,—Mrs. Buell.

[SONYA *looks at him round-eyed for a moment, then bursts out laughing.*]

MR. G. Delighted, Mrs. Buell.

M. CLÉM. [*Bowing low*] Madame—

SON. I am most happy. I am just in time wit de tea.

MR. G. [*Brightening visibly*] It is a very fortunate thing you have come. We are all in a frightfully demoralized state. Mr. Simpson, after the most heroic efforts on behalf of the refugees, found himself penniless. And I fear your husband is not entirely practical. He says now he has not money enough to go back to Switzerland.

SON. [*Charmed*] I can believe you. He is very thought-

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less. But I have de money. We will send de uncle back to Switzerland dis afternoon.

UNC. E. You will! Er—Clarence, I think, had better go too.

SON. O no. I have oder plans for Clarence.

CLAR. Now you see, Uncle Ezra. Don't you think for your credit you had best correct your statements?

[SONYA *who has poured out the tea now comes to* CLARENCE *with a cup.* UNCLE EZRA *moves hastily away.* MR. GRAVES *and* M. CLÉMENT, *quite paralyzed with pleasure, stand drinking tea.*]

CLAR. How on earth did you find me out?

SON. [*Enchanted*] I came on de same train wit you.

[*She leaves* CLARENCE *and, placing a chair between the Englishman and the Frenchman, takes out her money.*]

SON. You see? I have plenty.

[MR. GRAVES, *munching bread and butter, assents cheerfully.* M. CLÉMENT *gesticulates with his bread and butter.*]

SON. Dere! Dat is enough for de journey. Is it not?

[*The two Allies assent. She appeals to* UNCLE EZRA.]

UNC. E. [*Suddenly aware he is being appealed to; coldly*] I do not know!

MR. G. But my dear man, Mrs. Buell is heaven-sent! What on earth is the matter with you now?

M. CLÉM. [*Taking the money from* SONYA *and handing it to* UNC. E.] Mais, monsieur. Eet ees here. Eet ees enough. Eet ees good money. Take it. We implore.

[UNCLE EZRA *remains obdurate.* M. CLÉMENT *slowly gives the money back to* SONYA.]

CLAR. Take it, Uncle Ezra, and leave me to my fate.

UNC. E. [*Coming to* CLARENCE *and speaking confidentially*] I will not take the wages of sin.

CLAR. Well, it's not to begin with. And it wouldn't hurt you if it were!

MR. G. Very well. And we can now leave you to put him on the train?

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SON. Cer-tainly. Clarence and I would be delighted.

CLAR. I wouldn't be delighted at all.

MR. G. Why, man, you're not even a gentleman.

CLAR. It wouldn't do to be a gentleman. To be a gentleman would compromise me beyond repair.

MR. G. [*Looking anxiously at his watch*] We can't let Mrs. Buell do it alone! Very well then,—M. Clément and I will see that he gets off. But I must say your actions are very singular.

CLAR. Yes they are. It is because I am a doomed man, and it doesn't matter any more how I behave.

MR. G. [*Going gravely to* SONYA] We really must be going on, M. Clément and I. We will see your uncle to the train. But—really I had expected that your husband—

SON. Let me explain. We have very important business here togeder, he and I. It is a great perplexity to him. He is not quite himself. And it is I who always take de cares and make de plans. [*She tries to imitate* MARY'S *manner.*] It will be better if you leave me undisturbed wit him. If you will see dat Uncle gets de train, I will surely show my gratitude. I will not forget you.

[*They shake her warmly by the hand.*]

M. CLÉM. Madame est très aimable. Très charmante.

MR. G. By Jove, we're awfully obliged to you!

SON. Here. Take de money. Uncle, he is a good man, but so careless. And his pockets are always full of holes. I have to mend dem when he visits me.

[UNCLE EZRA *shows sudden symptoms of anxiety.*]

UNC. E. But I never did—that's not so—

CLAR. [*Warningly*] O Uncle Ezra. How can you explain it in Georgetown Corners?

[SONYA *has handed the money to* MR. GRAVES.]

UNC. E. I shall see that money is *immediately* returned. When I get to Switzerland I shall ask Ma—. [*He goes to*

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[*The three men go out.* SONYA *stands laughing at* CLARENCE.]

CLAR. [*Sunk in his collar; looking up*] My God, you have a nerve. Mine's gone. I admit it.

[*She continues to laugh, then calmly goes and sits beside him on the bed. He gets up and slinks away.*]

CLAR. What the devil makes you follow me up like this?

SON. [*Shrugging*] Because you are so unwilling.

CLAR. Game! That's all I am to you!

SON. Yes. I confess it. And you? It is the same with you.

CLAR. And we call ourselves civilized. Hunting each other like beasts in the jungle. How soon do you tire of your victims?

SON. It all depends on how dey entertain me. Intimacy soon wears out—

CLAR. Thank goodness!

SON. If you do not wish to be intimate with me, why do you stay?

CLAR. Because my mind is—numb, all but the bump of curiosity. I want to see what you'll do next.

SON. I shall do noting. I shall sit here. Dat is all.

CLAR. I confess it. I'm fascinated.

[*A swift look of triumph passes over* SONYA'S *face. She suppresses it.*]

SON. [*Quietly*] Are you? Dey never show it in dis way. Dey never ran so far from me.

CLAR. O they did run a little way. Well, at least I have company!

SON. Very few.

CLAR. Tell me, I must know,—did they ever get away?

SON. Never. If dey went it was because I sent dem.

CLAR. Did they ever come back again?

SON. Hundreds! Yes. Dey are always coming back. Dat tires me. But you are not like de oders. It takes cleverness to reach you. You are fascinated, yes. But your eyes, dey arre wide open. You will not have de child of

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nature. No. Nor de siren. De good companion? Perhaps. Dat is what I am here to prove.

CLAR. O I've been catalogued. It seems to me the method is clumsy. [*He looks disgusted.*] You are treating me like a frog under a microscope.

SON. I do not. I am natural. You must feel de same.

CLAR. But you've trapped me. Vulgarly trapped me.

SON. Your good uncle,—he was so kind as to help me! [*She laughs.*]

CLAR. I tell you I can't feel natural in a cage.

SON. [*Calmly*] O my friend, we need not argue. If you do not like me, go. If you do, stay. I will not be unkind I assure you. We can find Paris very charming togeder.

CLAR. Charming! Paris! With this horror on everybody's face? No. Paris was charming. But just now, Paris is not natural either. I am going to leave you. I am going out to work for these people.

SON. I go wit you!

CLAR. Don't!

SON. Why not?

CLAR. I want to go alone.

SON. [*Angry*] I am tired of your insults!

CLAR. There. You are natural, all right. Very natural. [*He holds up a chair.*]

SON. [*Suppressing her feelings*] You will be no use among de wounded and de fugitives witout your wife to tell you what to do!

CLAR. Happy thought! I'll send for her. [*Feels in his pocket and takes out a little coin.*] Just enough for a telegram. Thanks for the advice.

[*He starts for the door. She places herself between him and the door looking dangerous.*]

SON. You treat me shamefully.

CLAR. Well. Why shouldn't I? We're nothing to each other.

SON. We might be.

CLAR. In God's name why?

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SON. Because you are a very great man—

CLAR. How did you find me out?

SON. I hear it on all sides. I need not hear it. I see it in your face.

CLAR. I'll wear a mask.

SON. Such a man as you should have une grande passion. It would do your work good.

CLAR. You know I've heard great claims for that theory. Never saw it succeed. All flirting ever did for me was to knock my work galley west.

SON. [*Eyeing him wildly*] Den dere *have* been oders!

CLAR. Why not? I should think that fitted perfectly into your theory.

SON. Not now! Not now! [*She pleads.*] I do not want you to remember. Look at me.

CLAR. Be-lieve me, I've done little else for the last half hour.

SON. I will not fail you! I of all de oders. I will not! Love me! I am here!

CLAR. O don't say that! I know you're here! And what I believe is that Mary sent you!

SON. [*Livid with anger*] Your wife! [*She mumbles inarticulately for a moment*]—

CLAR. See here. Do you want me to send for the people downstairs?

SON. [*Whispering*] No, no! I love—you—Clarence.

CLAR. [*Desperately to himself*] Horrors! It's come!

SON. [*Advancing step by step*] You love me!

CLAR. [*Steadily*] No. I do not.

SON. I will kill you! [*She is panting.*]

CLAR. Extracts from our best sellers.

SON. If I cannot have your love I will have your life.

CLAR. There! Grand climax on page 200!

[*She suddenly fastens herself about his neck. He is really suffering from a violent revulsion.*]

CLAR. This—is—sickening.

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CLAR. Take care! Take care! The authorities in this place will begin to wake up.

[*She flings herself face downward on the bed and gives way to an outburst of tragic feeling.*]

CLAR. My dear woman, no, not that! What shall I say? Don't carry on like this. I didn't mean to hurt you so—I didn't mean—

SON. [*Raising herself and drawing his head down to her*] What did you mean den?

CLAR. I won't have this unlovely hand-to-hand tussle I tell you.

[*He unfastens her hands.*]

CLAR. Now listen. To me this thing has been a pastime. I thought you felt the same. I ought to have known that a woman with your feelings can be hurt. I have been very thoughtless. I am deeply ashamed. I can only ask your pardon.

SON. I forgive you.

CLAR. No. Don't. I don't deserve it. Too bad. Too bad. Life hasn't been good to you. You haven't had half a chance.

SON. [*Ever watchful; panting; half sobbing*] Den perhaps you do—like me—a little?

CLAR. Now will you promise me to sit perfectly still?

[SONYA *nods her head.*]

CLAR. I like you very much—[*At a movement on her part; quickly*]—I like you so much that I'm going to tell you something. Get into the life about you. Stop playing.

SON. Playing?

CLAR. All this—*hunting*—you do,—it's child's play. Study something. Do something. Be somebody. God knows we all make life hard enough for each other. It's only [illegible] that counts. And as long as we're working, we [illegible] heavens! I

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CLAR. Keep quiet. There's nothing to be done about it. I'm going to find—my wife.

[*He gets his hat and goes out quickly.* SONYA *waits only an instant. Then she shoots out after him, banging the door. There is a moment's pause. Then there is a knock at the door. Finally it is pushed open.* SIR GILBERT *puts in his head.*]

SIR G. This is certainly the number. Nobody here.

MARY. [*Following him*] We'll wait a while.

[*They come in.*]

SIR G. And yet the clerk said he was here. Assured me he hadn't gone out.

MARY. He might have gone down by the stairs while we were in the lift. I wonder what he has been doing without money all this time. He's probably sending me a telegram—

[*She sits on the foot of the bed as she talks. Suddenly she takes a bit of bright velvet from the coverlid.* SIR GILBERT *sees it. They look at it and at each other.* MARY'S *color visibly changes.*]

SIR G. My dear young lady. It was rather an experiment, this journey of ours.

[MARY *suddenly takes off her glasses and wipes her eyes.* MARY *has very nice eyes.*]

SIR G. I only wish for your sake that men were civilized.

MARY. [*Bravely*] Well. I'm not sorry I tried. I know it was the only thing to do. If he couldn't stand it, he's not the man I thought. If there's still a chance for him,—why there's still a chance!

[CLARENCE *tears the door open.*]

CLAR. [*Going to* MARY *and disregarding* SIR GILBERT] Thank God you've come! You shouldn't have left me alone!

[MARY'S *little hat falls to the floor. She throws her*

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CLAR. Never again! Ne-ver again! I couldn't live through it twice!

MARY. I'm—so—glad!

[*His arms are about her. Her face is buried in his chest.*]

CLAR. [*Hurriedly*] But you know you really ought not to have—

[THE CURTAIN FALLS ON HIS HOMILY]

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